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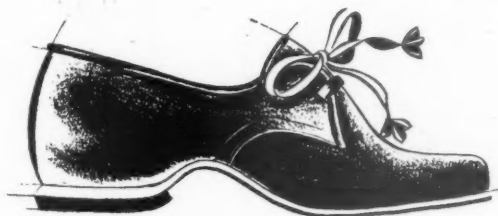
'Bond Street' . . . provocative as the skilful play of a fringed fan . . . as full of beguilement as your eyes can be when you choose. Yardley Perfume enshrines the many-mooded Eve in you! Yardley, 33 Old Bond Street, London W1



'BOND STREET'
BY
YARDLEY

that Brevitt look

is the look
of fashion



'Texas'

Brevitt's inimitable Bouncer with its unique features plus a full range of fittings. Your size and your fitting is available in this model in Black Fury, Chocolata and Bo'sun Blue in calf. (Pat. No. 549812).

Manfield & Sons Ltd

PICCADILLY & REGENT STREET, LONDON
SHEFFIELD • DONCASTER • BIRMINGHAM • GLASGOW



From the earliest days of domestic history, good household linen has been the subject of great pride and for generations housewives have been proud to say their sheets, pillowcases and towels were made by Horrockses. The name commands respect in every woman's mind and shall ever stand for quality the world over.

Horrockses

the Greatest Name in Cotton

SHEETS • PILLOWCASES • TOWELS • DRESS GOODS • FURNISHINGS • ETC.

HORROCKSES, CRIMMON & CO. LTD., PRESTON, MANCHESTER, BOLTON, LONDON

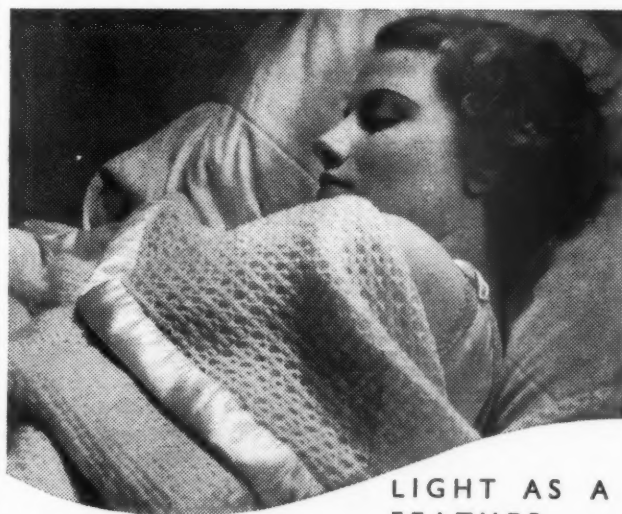


MOTOLUXE
The crest of COATS

Improved supplies of the authentic "MOTOLUXE" Fur Fabric Coats are now becoming available through the leading Retail Stores. In case of difficulty write to us for the address of the nearest Agent.

LEE BROTHERS (OVERWEAR) LTD., Queen St. Works, 54 Regina Street, London, N.W.1
1848—Established over 100 Years—1949

* MOTOLUXE MOTOR RUGS are again obtainable in the home trade.



LIGHT AS A
FEATHER...

Lan-air-cel
BLANKETS



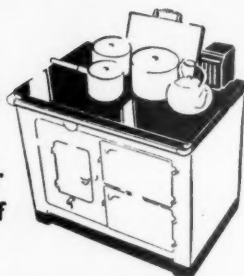
By appointment to H.M. the King
Manufacturers of
Lan-Air-Cel Blankets

giving caressing warmth without weight. These cellular blankets are cherished possessions and if you take care of them they will last a lifetime. Coloured blankets are again available to the Home market.

Sole Manufacturers:
McCALLUM & CRAIGIE, LTD.,
Shettleston, Glasgow, E.2
London Office: Roxburghe House,
287, Regent Street, London, W.1

ESSE

the modern cooker
that pays for itself



Cooking is a pleasure with an ESSE. The hotplate is extra fast-boiling and in every ESSE there are at least two ovens, one for roasting and one for slow-cooking. Both hotplate and ovens are always hot 24 hours a day.

As for fuel saving! Headaches about bills are banished with an ESSE. For example, the No. 3 Fairy illustrated cooks for six and supplies constant hot water on, approximately 26 lbs. of coke in 24 hours. Compare this with your pre-

sent fuel bills for cooking and water heating. For larger demands there are ESSE models with separately fired water heaters.

Refuelling is particularly simple. The filling-plug is removed and coke nuts 'poured' into the hopper from the handy hod supplied. Anthracite and Phurnacite are also suitable.

Other standard features are—thermostatic control, thermometer, towel rail and shining porcelain enamel finish.

QUICK DELIVERY. Write for details. Hire Purchase arranged.

The ESSE COOKER Company
Proprietors: Smith & Wellstood Ltd. Est. 1854
Head Office: Bonnybridge, Scotland
London: 46 Davies Street, W.1
and Liverpool, Edinburgh & Glasgow

Fortune
makes the heart
grow fonder

Pictured below are:
Malt Caramel and Hazelnut,
Montelimart, Marzipan and
Hazelnuts, Truffle—four
chocolates in Fortune assortment
made by

CALEY
OF NORWICH



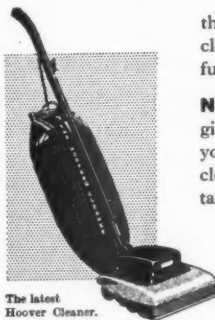
"...and please
bring Mummy
a new
Hoover"

Johnnie's quite right. Nothing could possibly please Mummy more than a new Hoover

Cleaner. But, Father Christmas

please note, it must be a Hoover because they do so much *more* than ordinary vacuum cleaners. They keep carpets clean and colourful — *prolong their life, too!*

NOTE FOR DAD! She deserves the best, so give Father Christmas a helping hand. See your Hoover Dealer *now*. Prices complete with cleaning tools, from 10 gns. to 22 gns. (plus tax). Many dealers offer hire purchase terms.

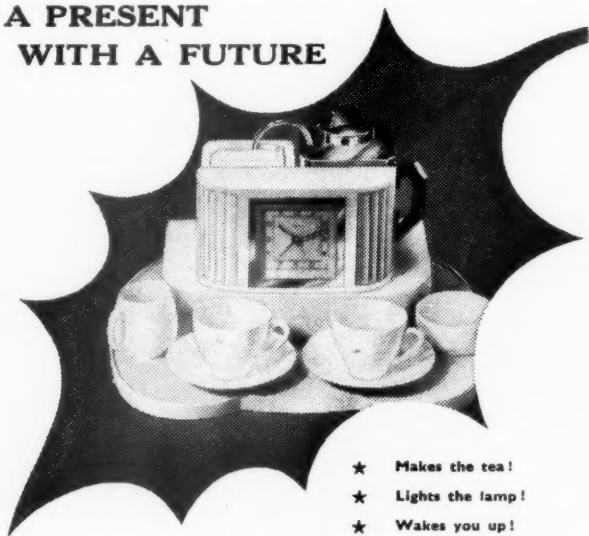


The latest
Hoover Cleaner.
The marvellous
new model 612.

The **HOOVER**
REGD. TRADE MARK CLEANER
It BEATS...as it Sucks...as it Cleans

HOOVER LIMITED • PERIVALE • GREENFORD • MIDDLESEX

A PRESENT
WITH A FUTURE



- ★ Makes the tea!
- ★ Lights the lamp!
- ★ Wakes you up!

WHAT happier idea for Christmas than a present which brings a cheery good morning for all the rest of the year. The Goblin "Teasmade" is entirely automatic, it boils the water, makes the tea, lights the lamp and wakes you up. Incorporates an electric clock, electric kettle, lamp and tea-pot. Other crockery extra. A GOBLIN product, obtainable through any store or electrical dealer. Price £15 4s. 9d. inclusive of Purchase Tax.

GOBLIN  *Teasmade*

The BRITISH VACUUM CLEANER & ENGINEERING CO. LTD. (Dept. P.U.), Goblin Works, Leatherhead, Surrey

By Appointment
Biscuit Manufacturers to H.M. King George VI
HUNTLEY & PALMERS LTD. READING, ENGLAND

Huntley & Palmers

*the first name
you think of in*

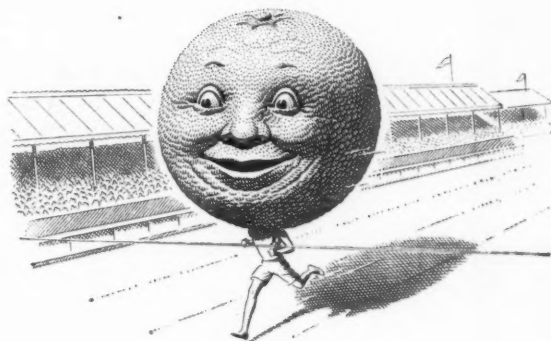


Osborne

Biscuits

WHO DRANK THE ORANGE SQUASH?

I did, said the Sprinter



I always run for



IDRIS

The Quality Soft Drink

Squashes 3/- per bottle

The famous sweet pickle...



TRUST Maconochies FOR FLAVOUR



Country Champion

If you have an eye for an aristocratic cardigan, you will approve these fine, Scotch-knit types now in our Man's shop. They are very well shaped, exceedingly soft, and excellently finished. The most congenial garment for cooler days. In natural shades. Sizes 36"-46". From about £5

Liberty

of Regent Street

This is the Gin



By Appointment
Gin Distillers
to H.M. King George VI
Tanqueray, Gordon & Co. Ltd.

Quality
Incomparable

Gordon's

Stands Supreme

Maximum Prices: Per Bottle 32/4; Half-Bottle 16/11. U.K. only

Cigars-

*the Gift that
pleases!*

*with the Season's
Mr J. Browning
compliments*

*David -
all the best for
Christmas*

*to Daddy -
Happy Christmas
Love Pam*

*To Howard
with Christmas wishes
and fondest love*

Acceptable at any time, but especially at Christmas, La Tropical de Luxe Cigars are available singly, in 5's cartons, or 10, 25, and 50 Boxes.

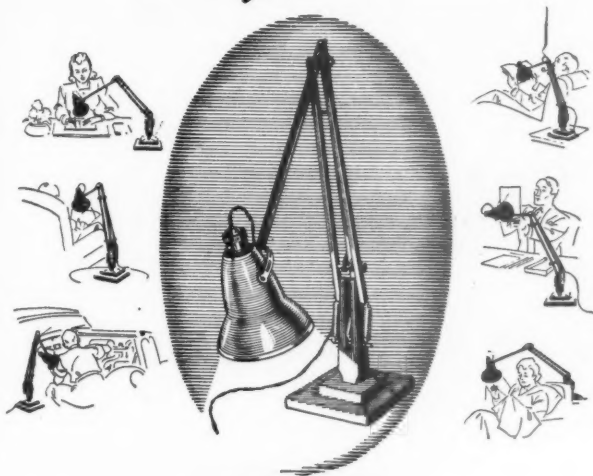
LA TROPICAL

OF LUXE

Finest Jamaican Cigars

L.T. 10

ANY POSITION YOU LIKE
ANY *angle* YOU FANCY



THE **TERRY**
Anglepoise Lamp

A finger touch puts it where you want it . . . here, there, anywhere . . . and it stays there—rock steady. Anglepoise (light at 1001 angles) needs only a 25 or 40 watt bulb. All good Electricians or stores. *Pat. all countries.*

Sole Makers:
HERBERT TERRY & SONS LTD., REDDITCH. London, Manchester, Birmingham



This Christmas
it's a case of
ANTLER for
everybody!

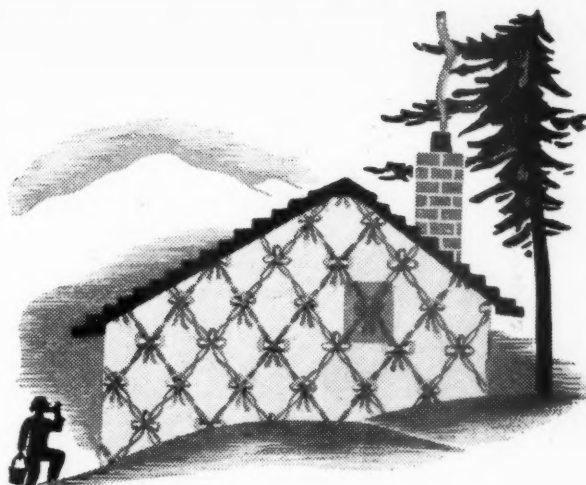


ANTLER

*The most distinguished name
in Travel Goods*

The perfect present—useful, long remembered and flattering because, as everybody knows, the very name ANTLER speaks for superlative workmanship and finish. Ask to see these ANTLER soft-sided cases and others in the famous ANTLER range. No range could be at once so handsome and so inexpensive. For example, the 18" Blouse Case is priced at only 68/6.

J. B. BROOKS & CO., LTD.
BIRMINGHAM, 3.



*If Hermits papered the walls
of their huts, it's certain they'd
brighten their seclusion with*

SANDERSON
WALLPAPERS

Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Limited
52-53 Berners Street, London, W.1, & 6-7 Newton Terrace, Glasgow, C.3



*Warm in bed
with a WINDAK*

Who wouldn't relish the cosy comfort of an electrically heated bed blanket on winter nights—the luxury of all-over-the-bed warmth?

Simply set the control by your bed and the WINDAK electrically heated bed blanket will maintain the desired heat as long as you require it. You can sleep on it as there is no danger from the harmless voltage which passes through the blanket.

We shall be pleased to send you the name of your nearest stockist.



ELECTRIC

SAFETY *blanket*

WINDAK LTD., WOODSIDE, POYNTON, CHESHIRE

JN 810



A fine stock of
Overcoats
ready - to - wear

in a wide choice of styles,
patterns and materials

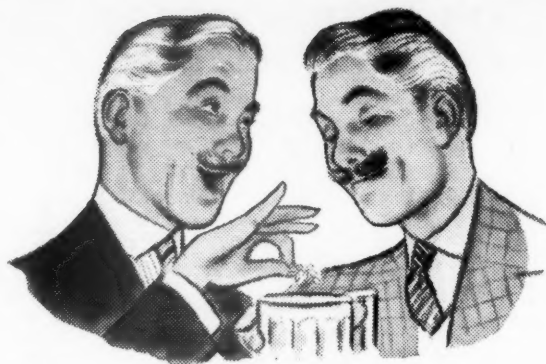


MOSS BROS

OF COVENT GARDEN
THE COMPLETE MAN'S STORE

Junction of
Garrick and Bedford Streets, W.C.2
Temple Bar 4477

AND BRANCHES



Green grows the Borage O!

This miniature bouquet you lay so reverently on my Pimm's, old boy - awfully jolly and all that, but what's the idea? . . . That's funny. Could have sworn you said Borage . . . Oh, you did. I see . . . Makes the most heavenly drink on earth positively seventh-heavenly, does it? . . . Now why didn't they tell us that on our refresher courses?

We make it from suave London distilled gin, hard-to-get liqueurs from France and Holland and, of course, a certain something. You add bottled lemonade and ice, top with borage—and you have the most heavenly drink on earth.

PIMM'S No. 1

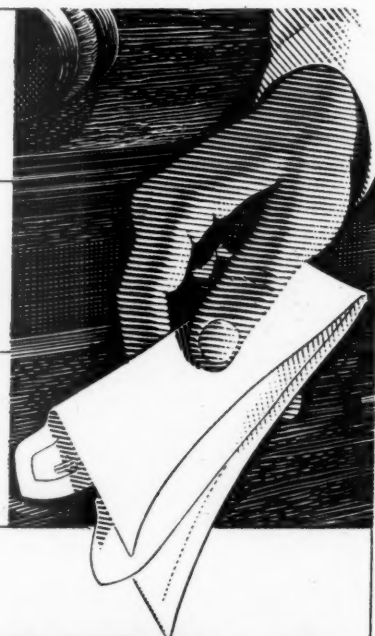


Cigar connoisseurs—for whom the finer points of bouquet, wrapper and filler are matters of moment—will enjoy Don Luis Jamaican cigars—an importation exclusive to Rothmans. Write for details of size and prices. Rothmans Ltd. (Folio H. 15)
5 Pall Mall, S.W.1.

Rothman of Pall Mall

THE BEST-KNOWN TOBACCONIST
IN THE WORLD

Out of
the top
drawer



VAN HEUSEN

THE WORLD'S BEST SEMI-STIFF COLLAR

Made by HARDING, TILTON & HARTLEY LTD., LONDON & TAUNTON



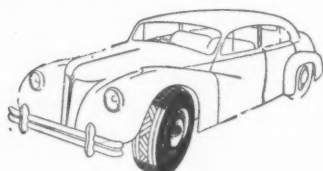
The Largest Official Retailers of
ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY
Stock List of Used Cars on request



Showrooms : 12-13 St. George Street, Hanover Square, London, W.1.
Service Works : Lombard Road, Morden Road, Merton, S.W.19.

MAYfair 7444
LIBerty 7222

that's
better

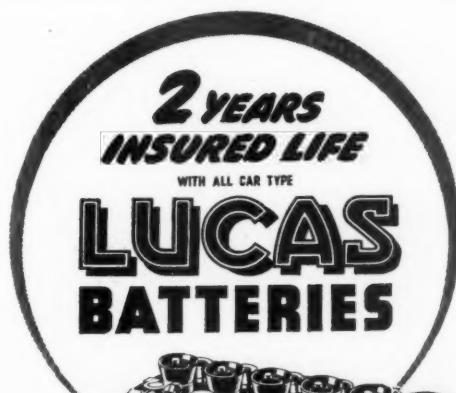


★ It doesn't take more than a mile to discover the difference that Avon Tyres make to comfort, silence and safety — but many thousands of miles later you will realise that an Avon is the longest wearing tyre you have ever fitted.

SAFE, SILENT
AVON
THE QUALITY TYRE



THE AVON INDIA RUBBER CO. LTD., MELKSHAM, WILTS. EST. 1885



**LUCAS
BATTERIES**



Ask for full details of this UNIQUE BATTERY RENEWAL SCHEME from your local garage or write for list of Agents and battery literature.



(This scheme applies to Home Market Only)

JOSEPH LUCAS LTD • BIRMINGHAM 19



At the Adelphi..

in association with Anthony Vivian

CHARLES B. COCHRAN

presents

TOUGH AT THE TOP

Once again the spectacular beauty of

'Celanese' Fabrics

has given them a leading part in a Cochran Production. All the splendour of the Edwardians is evoked by Oliver Messel's costume designs . . . a splendour which is interpreted to perfection by these modern fabrics.



Such Fragrant Gifts...

so gaily presented ready for you to give and with a special card for your message. Perfume, the supreme gift . . . as important to an attractive woman as it is to a rose . . .

L'AIMANT for the perfect hostess with magnetic charm.
From 19/3 to £3/19/6.

MUSE for the smart townswoman, elegant in every gesture.
From 20/- to £8/19/10.

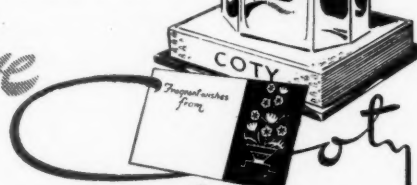
CHYPRE for the dark haired, dark eyed woman with an artistic temperament.
From 16/6 to £3/11/9.

PARIS sparkling and gay, for the woman brimful with laughter,
From 16/6 to £3/11/9.

MUGUET DES BOIS for the slender shy debutante.
From 12/4 to £2/17/11.



Give

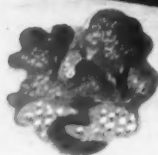


this Christmas

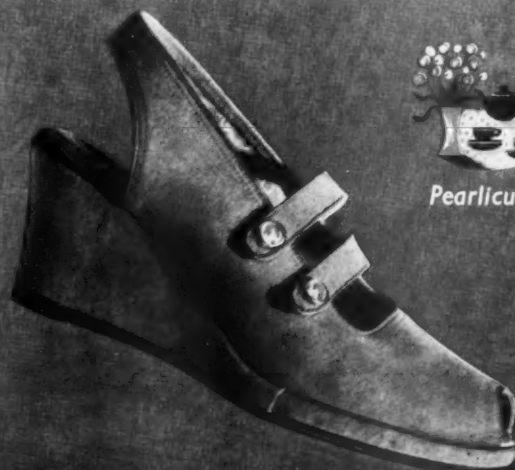
These, and a wide range of fragrant gift suggestions . . . precious accessories for the bath . . . dainty golden handbag vanities . . . gift coffrets . . . and other charming ideas may be seen at the best shops and stores everywhere. Also the Coty Salon, 3 New Bond Street, London, W.1

Punch Almanack November 7 1949

joyces began as play shoes, but they soon started getting around and about. To-day they go to school, to work, shopping, parties, the theatre—here, there and everywhere. Only joyces will do all this. To women all over Britain they're no longer casuals but a new way of thinking about shoes. Definitely—joyces are **different**—joyces are **joyces**.



Roundabout



Pearlicue



Alert

Jack O'Diamonds



V-Pump



JOYCE (CALIFORNIA) LTD., 37-38, OLD BOND ST.
LONDON, W.1.

Wholesale only but we welcome all joyce enquiries.

joyce
(CALIFORNIA)

"Hullo...
is that Reindeer 4711...?"

If only she could 'phone Santa Claus she'd say,
"Please bring me something from
the '4711' gift list this Christmas."

For whatever her age '4711' is the gift
that flatters her eternal femininity.



'4711'
Eau de Cologne
TALCUM POWDER
3/-, 5/6
(incl. tax)



'4711' 'TOSCA'
Concentrated Perfume
The magic of glamour
5/3, 10/6 (incl. tax)



'4711' 'TOSCA' Perfumed Eau de Cologne

The freshness of
Eau de Cologne
combined with
a Lasting Perfume.

Decorative Bottles
5/11, 11/-
(incl. tax)

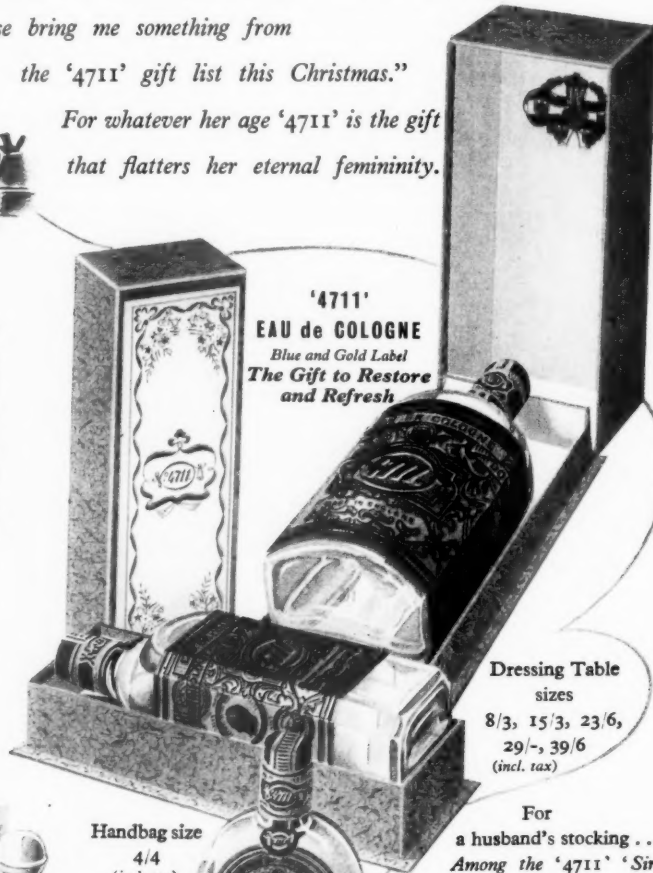
Handbag size
3/-
(incl. tax)



Handbag size
4/4
(incl. tax)

'4711'
Famous RHINE LAVENDER
Fragrance of an old-world garden
3/10, 7/2, 12/3 (incl. tax)

'4711'
EAU de COLOGNE
Blue and Gold Label
The Gift to Restore
and Refresh



Dressing Table
sizes
8/3, 15/3, 23/6,
29/-, 39/6
(incl. tax)

For
a husband's stocking...
Among the '4711' 'Sir'
Series for men are the
shaving creams and hair
dressings that make ideal
"surprises" for male Christ-
mas stockings.

8:4711.



Choose Christmas remembrances for your wider circle
of friends from '4711' Aids to Beauty... lipsticks,
powders, creams.

Christmas Gifts

If you have any difficulty in obtaining the gift you want, write to '4711', Slough, Buckinghamshire,
for the name of the nearest dealer stocking it.

MADE IN ENGLAND





A Jacqmar Scarf

"Marguerite," a charming gift for someone special. In pure silk crêpe-de-chine, price 89/6.

For other choices, write for **illustrated booklet of scarves by Jacqmar.**

16, GROSVENOR STREET, LONDON, W.1.



NEW WORDS for NEW TIMES

“Neon-lighting”

“Schweppervescence”

Fairy-lighting then—now 10,000 volts in coruscating tubes.
Schweppes, quietly lending its name to the language, keeps on making life brighter.

schweppervescence lasts the whole drink through



Only an outstanding tobacco could win, and hold, the world-wide preference shown by smokers for Craven Mixture. This superlatively satisfying tobacco is one of the finest ever made

“a Tobacco to live for”
Sir James Barrie in
“My Lady Nicotine”

Henry Cotton always wears and recommends -

LOTUS

The row of spikes set at an angle on the inner edge of the sole remain firmly embedded and retain their grip when the foot is tilted during the stroke.

Anglespike Shoes for Golf

CONSTRUCTORS

Craftsmanship in Steel

OFFICE FURNITURE

Specially designed for the

EXPORT MARKET

Enquiries invited.

Ask for CATALOGUE NP/760

CONSTRUCTORS LTD TYNSH ROAD BIRMINGHAM 24



**ZIEGLER
AND
BOOTH
IN NEW DUET**

Why important people are Ronson people

This famous husband-and-wife singing team agree about lighters—each has a Ronson. "Looks like a dream," says she. "Works like a dream," says he. "A Ronson lights up first time every time." People in the limelight must have only the best—naturally most choose a Ronson.

RONSON

WORLD'S
GREATEST LIGHTER



Precision - built with simple one-finger, one-motion, safety action, this Ronson Standard Butler sells for 38/6 There are many other Ronson models in various styles and finishes. Don't accept imitations—look for the name Ronson.



COLAS FOR ALL SURFACING JOBS

A playground with an ideal surface—clean, level, dust-free, quick-drying and long-lasting COLAS. For drives, car parks, pathways . . . COLAS has a thousand uses. It can be laid cold, without skilled labour or special apparatus, in almost any weather. Attractive coloured chippings can be used for the final coat. And it will last unattended, for years.

COLAS EMULSION
EASY TO LAY . . . RESISTANT TO WEAR

May we remind you that the COLAS Service Organisation is able to contract for the construction, maintenance and repair of footpaths, carriageways, drives, etc. COLAS PRODUCTS LIMITED • 418 STRAND LONDON W.C.2 • TEMPLE BAR 9841



BY ROYAL COMMAND

'Take a shop,' said the Prince, and Mr. Marcovitch, who, a hundred years ago, was making his cigarettes in an obscure room near Piccadilly, knew that their excellence had made him famous. Ever since, Marcovitch Cigarettes have been made to the same high standards as won the approval of that Eminent Personage and his friends; they are rolled of the very finest tobacco, for the pleasure of those whose palates appreciate perfection.



Marcovitch
BLACK AND WHITE
cigarettes for Virginia smokers

25 for 5/3

Also **BLACK AND WHITE**
SMOKING MIXTURE

2 oz. tin 9/5

ISSUED BY GODFREY PHILLIPS LTD

Note the
Difference with a
VENUS

STRONG . . . Pressure proofed by patented process and tested at every stage. Only proven leads go into Venus Drawing Pencils. **SMOOTH** . . . A patented colloidal process removes all grit and impurities—they must be smooth. **ACCURATE** . . . Accurate through and through—graded and tested by experts Venus Drawing Pencils make the right mark every time.



VENUS
Perfect PENCILS

THE PENCIL WITH
THE CRACKLE FINISH

VENUS PENCIL CO., LIMITED, LOWER CLAPTON ROAD, LONDON, E.S.



PRODUCTION is the word, the cry, the clamour. Unless we produce more we will perish as a first-class nation. But before the pace of production can reach its peak, industry must be properly housed—The speediest way of building is to build in steel . . . we build in steel.

**BANISTER,
WALTON & CO.
LTD.**
STRUCTURAL STEELWORK
RIVETED ★ WELDED

LONDON—82 Victoria St., S.W.1 MANCHESTER 17—Trafford Pk. BIRMINGHAM—61/63 Western Rd



*In achieving perfection
quality must be as consistent
in detail as in fundamentals*

ROLLS-ROYCE

are supplied with

CHAMPION

PLUGS



CHAMPION SPARKING PLUG CO., LTD.,
FELTHAM • MIDDLESEX

£4,159

FOR YOU AT AGE 55

Suppose, for example, you are not over 45, this is how the plan will help you—for women the benefits are slightly different. You make agreed monthly, quarterly, or yearly payments to the Sun Life of Canada—and at 55 you will receive £4,159 plus accumulated dividends—or £240 a year for life and accumulated dividends. If you are over 45, the benefits are available at a later age.

£3,000 For Your Family.

Whilst building up this retirement fund or pension your family is provided for. Should you not live to age 55 your-

self your family would receive £3,000, even if you had made only one payment under the plan.

Income Tax Saved.

Income tax payers are entitled to the appropriate allowance of tax applicable to premiums paid under this plan.

Over 1,500,000 Men and Women.

Over 1,500,000 men and women in all parts of the world are providing for themselves or their families under policies issued by the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada for sums assured of £911,000,000.

By filling up and sending the enquiry form you can obtain details suited to your personal requirements. The plan covers all amounts of savings from as little as £2 per month, and the proportionate cash or pension can be arranged in most cases to commence either at age 50, 55, 60, or 65. It also applies to sons and daughters, who would greatly benefit by starting now. It is the safest and most profitable way of providing financially for you and yours.

FILL IN THIS FORM NOW

POSTAGE ONE PENNY IF UNSEALED

To M. MACAULAY (General Manager for British Isles)

SUN LIFE ASSURANCE CO. OF CANADA

20, Sun of Canada House, Cockspur St., London, S.W.1.

I should like to know more about your Plan, as advertised, without incurring any obligation.

NAME
(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

ADDRESS

Occupation

Exact date of birth

Punch. Nov. 7, 1949

Ever since 1824

ANGOSTURA

aromatic bitters
has added flavour to
SOUPS
FRUIT JUICES
FRESH FRUITS

Use a few drops
and **KNOW** the **NEW**
Flavour!

ANGOSTURA
AROMATIC BITTERS

ANGOSTURA BITTERS
(Dr. J. G. B. Siegert & Sons) LIMITED
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I.

MEMORIES OF COMFORTABLE DAYS

Life is not very easy for those of gentle upbringing who now find themselves in great need. Many gentlewomen are living in great distress, alone in tiny one-roomed homes, with only memories of the comfortable days. With your help we can at least "take the edge off" their suffering, and make life less of a burden to those who, when times were good, were the first to help others in need.

Cheques, etc., should be sent to: Rev. Prebendary Hubert H. Treacher, General Secretary and Head, Church Army, 55, Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

COINTREAU
Extra Dry for England
THE WELL BALANCED LIQUEUR
A Century of World-wide Reputation
1849 — 1949

'Kings Own'
DRAWING PENCILS..
AVAILABLE NOW!...
The CUMBERLAND PENCIL CO. LTD.
KESWICK

By appointment



to H. M. The King

Introducing a new member of the Bristol family

HARVEY'S "BRISTOL DRY" SHERRY



HARVEY'S BRISTOL CREAM and BRISTOL MILK are famous all over the World as the finest full Oloroso Sherries. BRISTOL DRY is a superb FINO of great age, blended to suit the taste of those who prefer a rather drier Wine. Price 25/- per bottle. On receipt of a remittance for this amount a sample bottle will be sent postage and package free.

JOHN HARVEY & SONS LTD.

5 Pipe Lane, Colston Street, BRISTOL, 1

LONDON OFFICE—40, King Street, St. James's. Subsidiary Companies, or Branches at—Kidderminster, Portsmouth, Devonport, Chatham, Glasgow and Cardiff

RATTRAY'S TOBACCOS

OLD GOWRIE

7 RESERVE

Old Gowrie is an old-fashioned pressed Virginian tobacco selected with meticulous care and still prepared by hand by craftsmen who abhor haste and detest adulteration. It is admirably suited for those who accept their tobacco as one of the substantial pleasures in life.

A customer writes from **SURBITON**—

"I should very much like to bring up my son, now serving in India, to appreciate good tobacco, and wonder if you will be good enough to send him for me 1 lb. of Old Gowrie. It has been my pleasure to smoke Old Gowrie for the best part of ten years or more and the habit will do very well to be continued."



A customer writes from **HARROGATE**—

"Many thanks for the personal attention you gave to my enquiry; and I may say, in passing, that it is indeed pleasant these days to encounter such courtesy. The standard you set in your products is clearly high, and it is not surprising, therefore, that I like your tobacco."

To be obtained **ONLY** from:
CHARLES RATTRAY
Tobacco Blender, PERTH, SCOTLAND

Price 75/- per lb. Post Paid. Send 10/- for sample quarter-pound tin. Post Free.



Battersby
HATS

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"Nothing unusual about three meals a day, is there?"

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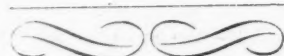
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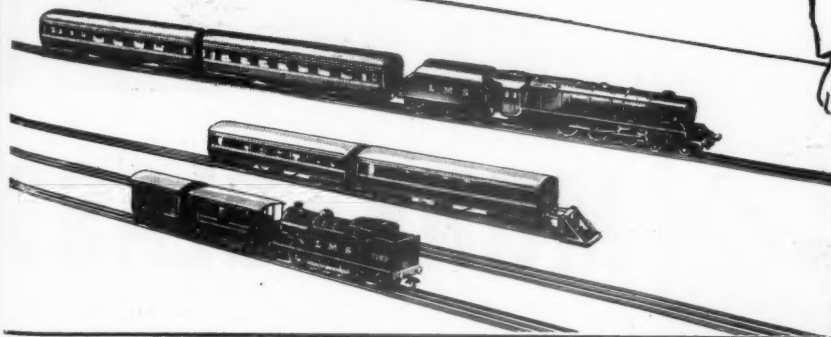
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Spend your all . . .
entice the finest chef . . .



give him an ideal
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a choice of garden-fresh
vegetables . . . the most
exotic spices.



Wait on him, watch him,
encourage him . . .



until he perfects his
recipe . . .



then — oh, la la, you'll
feast on soup !

or open a tin of
HEINZ!



Jolly good Custard



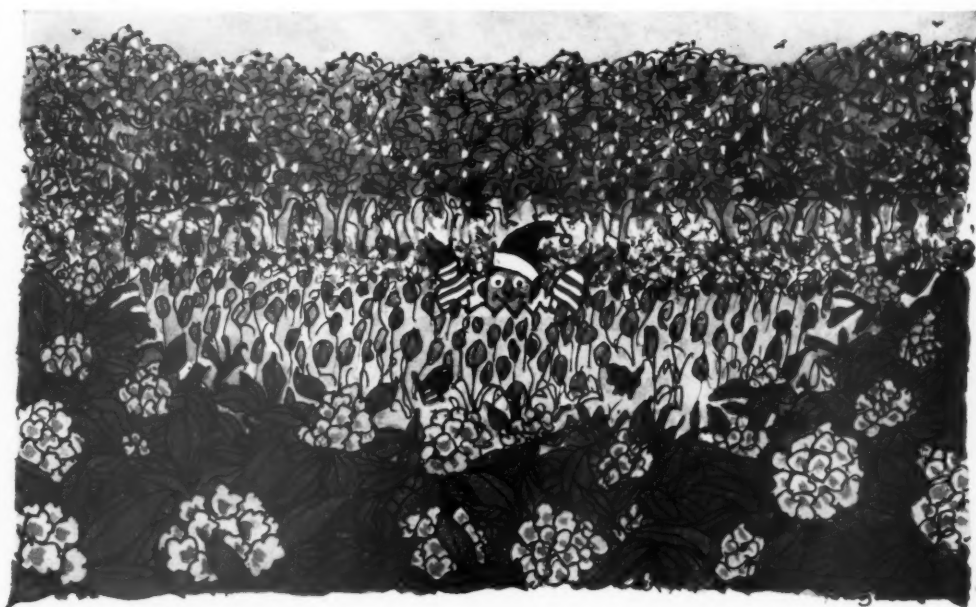
MONK & GLASS

V W E C X V I I
P U C H L M N A K f r i 50



This, fortunately, is a winter frontispiece—

July						
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—they're so much easier than summer ones.

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IN
CHILDHOOD

THE doors I passed through in my infancy
Hid their high heads among the stars; their span
Stretched markless leagues on either side of me.
I was a very small emergent man,

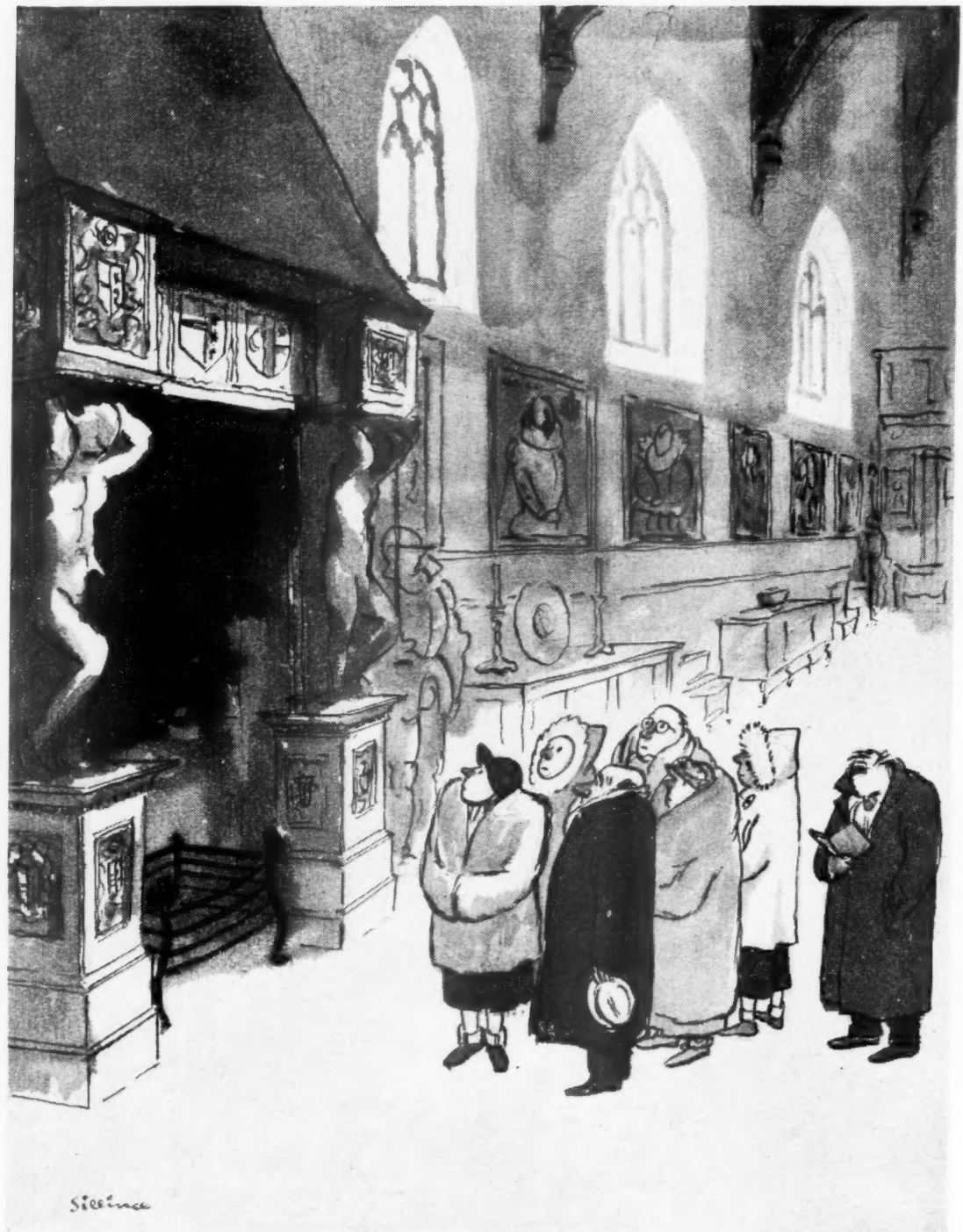
Whose halting footsteps paced a room so wide
That all the world and length of many days
Went by before I reached the other side.
Belike a wealth of undiscovered ways

Led off between the table and the chair
Towards some corner, where for endless age
I'd think myself a brigand in his lair,
A pirate, or a tiger in a cage.

Topless above me towered the papered wall,
And table leg as tall as any tree,
And time on kindly, laggard feet would crawl
From long-forgotten lunch to distant tea.

R. P. LISTER





"I wonder why they used to build such huge fireplaces."

TWO CHRISTMAS DINNERS

THE hardest bit of work I ever did? said the elderly engineer. I've dug tunnels under marshes, and made roads in some queer places. But it's the limitations you have to consider. It all depends on the limitations. The hardest piece of work I ever did was one Christmas Day a long time ago. I was younger then, or of course it would have been impossible. But I did it then. I'll tell you what it was.

I was staying that Christmas with two old friends in the country. No party. Just them and their young daughter, who was about sixteen. I think she was to come out the following year. We had dined early, as they always did when they were alone, and they kept to their habit with only me there. We had sat down at seven. I remember what we had for dinner. As a matter of fact I shall remember it all my life. My hostess had one of those brilliant minds that perhaps don't concern themselves much with trivialities, or, if they do for a while, they forget them. So she used to leave what they'd have for dinner entirely to the cook. They had a very good cook, so there was no harm in that. In fact quite the reverse, for one knew that that cook would never forget anything, whatever Alice Etherington might have done. And Jack Etherington, my host, appreciated a good dinner. We certainly had one. Turtle soup, I remember, we started with, and then some kind of fish. And an entrée after that, and some light wine. Then we had the joint, saddle of mutton, and champagne was brought in. And after that, as it was Christmas, we had a turkey, with of course all the usual extras such as sausages. Then we had plum-pudding and one or two mince-pies. And after that a savoury. My hostess and her daughter went to the drawing-room, while Jack and I sat over a few glasses of port, and I think I ate a salted almond or two. A bell rang, and Jack asked his butler what it was all about, and it turned out that the clergyman had come to call.

"Oh, yes," said Jack. "It's

about that damned bazaar. Alice has been dodging him whenever she sees him, but he's run us down at last. We shall have to give prizes, and she'll have to open it, and I'll have to make a speech. Well, it's Kismet."

"Why does he call at this hour?" I asked.

"Oh, he's tearing round doing something all day," said Jack. "He's never quiet. He's the curse of our lives. I don't suppose he had the time to come earlier."

Then we went into the drawing-room, and Alice was sitting talking to the clergyman, and there was a curious look on her face. They weren't talking about the bazaar. They were talking about the weather. I was introduced, and Jack joined in the talk. We noticed that the clergyman was in evening dress; but I supposed, and I think Jack

did, that he had dined early like us. Presently Jack got up from his chair and went to a writing-table and came back, and asked the clergyman if he would look at a picture that he had in that room, as he would like his opinion about it. As they turned away, Jack dropped an envelope on the arm of Alice's chair. On it was written, "He must have come to dine." We both read it. And then Alice said "I asked him!"

I could think of nothing to say, and she went on: "I asked him. I did it verbally. And I forgot. He had cornered me about that bazaar, and I had to do something. I asked him to dine to-night at eight o'clock. What shall we do?"

I could think of nothing whatever to do.

But Alice's mind, if forgetful, is inventive and it did not remain paralysed long. When she spoke, she



spoke with decision and clearness. "We must have dinner all over again," she said. "Lucy, go and tell them in the kitchen. And, Lucy, you'll be on one side of him. You must eat every course."

"That will be splendid," said Lucy. And off she went to the kitchen. Then Alice turned to me.

"I'll put you on the other side of him," she said. "I shall pretend to eat, and Jack will pretend. He cannot possibly do any more, it might kill him."

"I'm fairly good at pretending," I said. "I'll do what I can."

"No, no," she said. "We can't all play. If you do, he'll look up and see what we are doing. For you and Lucy it will have to be the real thing. You will be one on each side of him. We'll have three chairs on the other side of the table, all empty. Friends that were coming from London and don't seem to have turned up. I'll tell Lucy to arrange that. You and she will have to eat."

"Good Lord," I said.

Alice said nothing.

"Well, anyway, I'm a teetotaler," I said.

"That's the first I've heard of that," said Alice.

"One has to begin some time," I said. "I have made the resolution just now. No clergyman can object to that."

And Alice had to give way there. But she was adamant about the food. Every single course of it. As Jack and the clergyman came back from the picture she said very simply and firmly to Jack: "I'm afraid the Madge-Collinsons can't be coming. I told Lucy to go to the kitchen and ask them not to wait for them. I'll go and tell them to leave the chairs, so as not to delay dinner any further."

To the clergyman she said: "We were expecting three friends who haven't turned up. I am afraid dinner may be five minutes late." And that was all.

And then that dinner began all over again. Lucy enjoyed it.

DUNSANY



"... and when did you first become aware of your intense hatred of children?"

THE HAUNTED CASTLE

UP the ancient castle stairway
From the dreadful dungeon
keep

Climbing to the haunted chamber
Comes the ghost of old Sir Hector,
That incorrigible spectre,
Spoiling everybody's sleep.

Clanking in his gyves and fetters—
And what causes more alarm
Is that by some old tradition
This perpetual apparition
When one meets him on the landing
Has his head beneath his arm.

That itself would hardly matter—
Ghosts can mind their own
affairs—
Were it not that old Sir Hector
(They inform one at the castle)
Sometimes leaves his horrid parcel
At the bottom of the stairs.

Then the head begins to grumble,
Often have they heard it plain
"Hector, may I please remind thee
Thou hast left thy head behind
thee,"

And the miserable dotard
Turns to bring it back again.

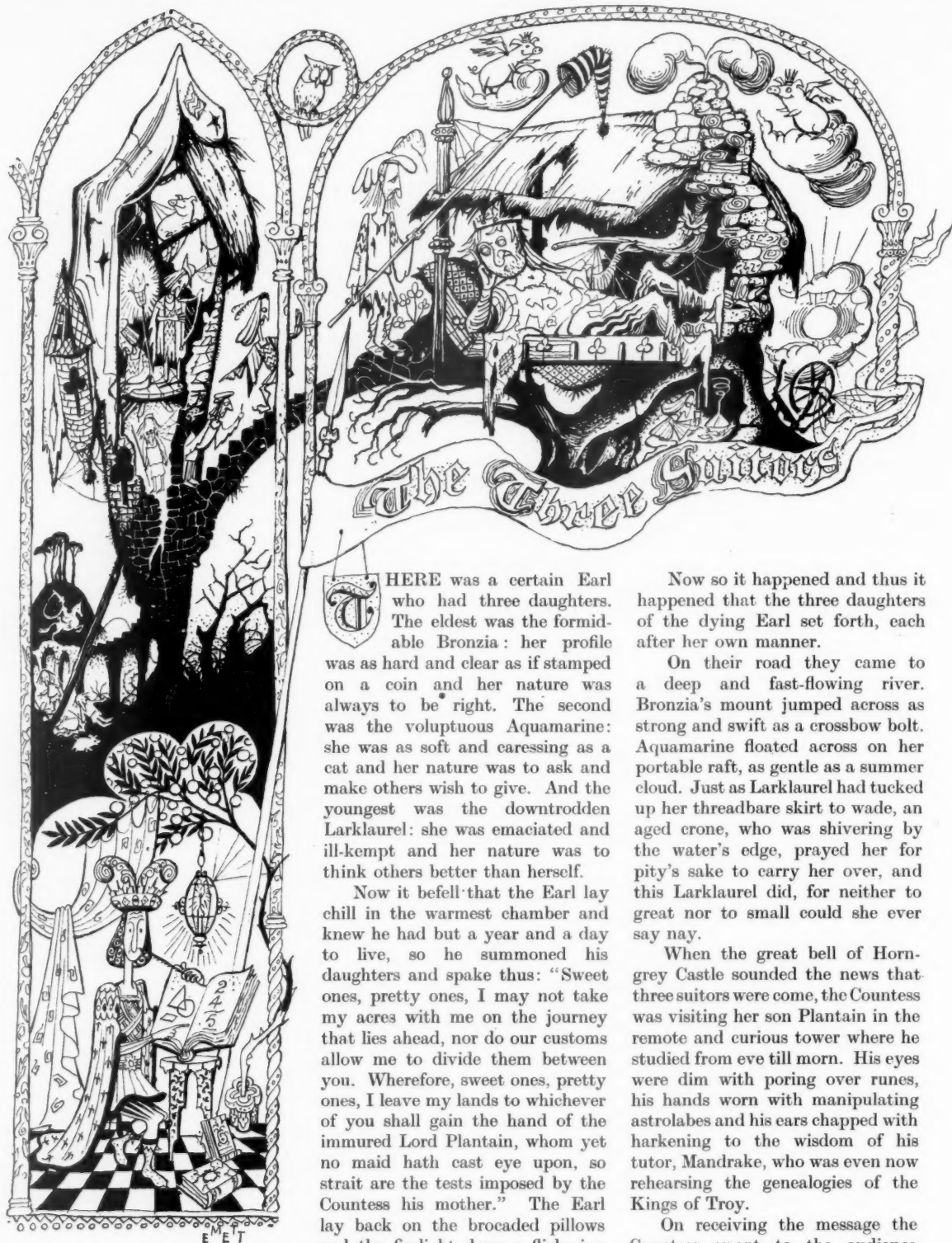
Even worse, in nights of winter
When the ghostly wassail cup
Seems to have bemused Sir Hector,
Guests have waked and heard him
stumble,
Lose his head and let it tumble
Down the stairs from halfway up.

Down it goes! It bumps! It clatters!
Down towards the dungeon keep
Shouting "Oh, my old protector,
Do not leave me, Hector, Hector!"
Every time it hits a landing—
How can anybody sleep!

Little wonder that the owners,
Wearied of Sir Hector's mood
(And the want of wealth and
servants),
Leave their ancient home forsaken—
And the castle has been taken
By the Ministry of Food.

EVOE





HERE was a certain Earl who had three daughters. The eldest was the formidable Bronzia: her profile was as hard and clear as if stamped on a coin and her nature was always to be right. The second was the voluptuous Aquamarine: she was as soft and caressing as a cat and her nature was to ask and make others wish to give. And the youngest was the downtrodden Larklaurel: she was emaciated and ill-kempt and her nature was to think others better than herself.

Now it befell that the Earl lay chill in the warmest chamber and knew he had but a year and a day to live, so he summoned his daughters and spake thus: "Sweet ones, pretty ones, I may not take my acres with me on the journey that lies ahead, nor do our customs allow me to divide them between you. Wherefore, sweet ones, pretty ones, I leave my lands to whichever of you shall gain the hand of the immured Lord Plantain, whom yet no maid hath cast eye upon, so strait are the tests imposed by the Countess his mother." The Earl lay back on the brocaded pillows and the firelight drew a flickering veil across his face.

Now so it happened and thus it happened that the three daughters of the dying Earl set forth, each after her own manner.

On their road they came to a deep and fast-flowing river. Bronzia's mount jumped across as strong and swift as a crossbow bolt. Aquamarine floated across on her portable raft, as gentle as a summer cloud. Just as Larklaurel had tucked up her threadbare skirt to wade, an aged crone, who was shivering by the water's edge, prayed her for pity's sake to carry her over, and this Larklaurel did, for neither to great nor to small could she ever say nay.

When the great bell of Horn-grey Castle sounded the news that three suitors were come, the Countess was visiting her son Plantain in the remote and curious tower where he studied from eve till morn. His eyes were dim with poring over runes, his hands worn with manipulating astrolabes and his ears chapped with harkening to the wisdom of his tutor, Mandrake, who was even now rehearsing the genealogies of the Kings of Troy.

On receiving the message the Countess swept to the audience chamber, once again to discourage

suitors by selecting tasks so arduous and debilitating that none had yet succeeded in their accomplishment.

She wasted little time in idle greetings, and sweeping aside Bronzia's recital of her abilities and Aquamarine's recital of her charms and Larklaurel's recital of her deficiencies, spoke thus: "You, chit," she said to Bronzia, "shall bring me the red nightcap that hangs upon the bedpost of Fergus, King of the Folk of Kerry. You, minx," she said to Aquamarine, "shall discover the secret name of the Golden Salmon of the Yellow River. And you, booby," she said to Larklaurel, "shall shoe the hoofs of Pan. Farewell."

She turned her back, like a statue on a revolving pedestal, and strode away.

Now so it happened and thus it happened that the daughters of the dying Earl set forth upon their missions, and what befell the proud and forthright Bronzia shall we first relate.

With an even stride her steed bore her towards the setting sun, until the land of Kerry lay ahead, where she found the palace of the king. Ere long she was in the presence of the king himself as he sprawled on a bed of sacking and smoked a pipe of peat. Gazing upon him with a haughty and downtaking eye, Bronzia thundered: "King you may be, monarch you are not. Here you lie fat among the fumes like a bacon fitch, and did men not know you ruled the Folk of Kerry they would take you for some road-worn huckster slumping into the evening of his days."

Fergus puffed and bridled and half took umbrage, but lazily drew back from the effort as Bronzia grew wroth. Gripping her spear so tightly that the wood warped and the point lay over like a pillowed head, she sent echoing denunciations through the smoky rafters, disturbing several owls that perched thereon, and a small pig snoring on a shelf.

For three days and three nights and the dim-lit times that lay between them, Bronzia hectored and stormed while the court yawned

their jaws to powder as they lounged against the cobwebbed walls. Too good-natured to hang the jade and too lazy to duck her and too vague about the boundaries of the kingdom to deport her, Fergus at length gave way and ordered his jeweller to make him a crown, his weaver to weave him a robe and his armourer to devise him a sceptre. Still was not Bronzia satisfied. "When I am gone," she said suspiciously, "you will fall back into barbarian ease and wear a nightcap instead of a crown." With a gesture so intimidating that Fergus shrank away, she snatched his red nightcap from the

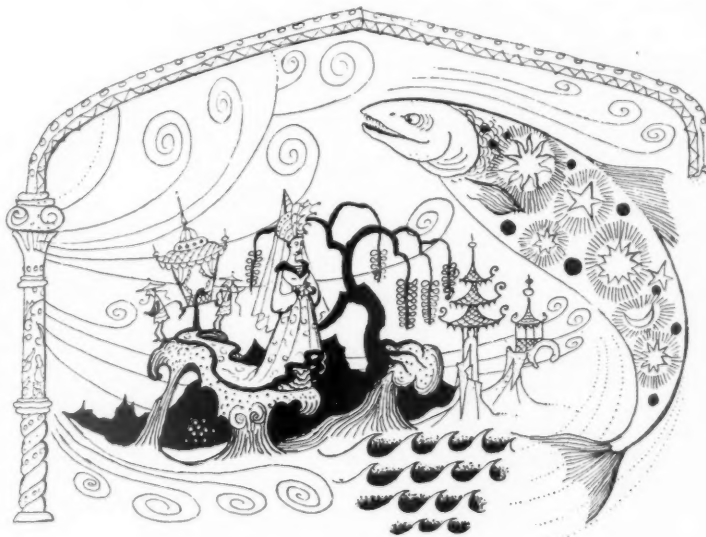
bedpost and cried "Thus will I remove temptation from you." Holding the prize she turned her horse through the door and sped like a thunderbolt back to Horngrey Castle.

Now what befell the soft and luxurious Aquamarine shall we next relate, as she sought the secret name

of skin and slant of eye. Yet all took care for her comfort and galloped forwards athwart the Orient.

Now so it happened and thus it happened that they came to the banks of the Yellow River. At this season of the year the Golden Salmon was accustomed to leap high into the air and peer round at the earth to see what was accomplished thereon; and the place he chose for his leaping was where Aquamarine now rode at her ease. When he leapt first from the swirling waters he noted the lady in her litter and preened himself. On his next appearance she gave him a smile so dazzling that the bright sun seemed a dweller on the earth. On his third, fourth and fifth leaps the Salmon bashfully opened converse with her, pointing out interesting features of the landscape.

Then did the ravishing Aquamarine thus address the Golden Salmon: "Sweet frisking Salmon, though no acquaintance has performed the ceremony of introduction, may I not call you by your



of the Golden Salmon of the Yellow River.

Day after day her litter was borne swiftly towards the rising sun. First were her porters tall and flaxen-haired, then were they squat and dark, and lastly were they yellow

name, which, alas, I do not know?" "Leaping Lotus," said the Salmon shyly. "Oh, Leaping Lotus," cried Aquamarine, "I fear you entreat me more as a stranger than as a friend. That is the name by which you are known to all the world. But what is

the secret name, which is used only by the Special Ones?" This question made the Salmon proud yet embarrassed, for his secret name was the source of his power, and only the charms of so fair a maiden could overcome his fear of revealing it. Leaping as near to Aquamarine as he could, he whispered, "My secret name is 'Father-of-Nine-Thousand-and-Three.'" With an uninterested wave of dismissal, Aquamarine took leave of her disconcerted informant and was rapidly and gently borne back to Horngrey Castle.

Now what befell the drab and lowly Larklaurel shall we last relate as she set forth to shoe the hoofs of Pan.

As in the lowest of spirits she walked out along the track, she met the crone, who begged the favour of her company. Good-hearted, and half-expectant that she would receive from her more than mortal aid, Larklaurel bade her welcome. Day after day they dragged themselves over the hard and infertile soil, till a pass in the mountains led them to a fair upland plain through whose lush meadows cool rivers purled; the scent of thyme soothed them with its promise of honey, and the sky was as cloudless as only the sky can be.

Now so it happened and thus it happened that in the heat of the noonday they heard in the distance a melody so piercing sweet that none but Pan could have drawn it from his reed. Soon they were in sight of the player, and there before them, seated upon a rock, was Pan himself.

At this moment a passing snake darted its fang at his heel. Its venom could not prevail against his divine life but it made him jump in anguish, and he called to Larklaurel to bathe his wound. Shyly she attended to it and then, having his hoof in her hand, mumbled a request for permission to shoe it. "Are you expert in the farrier's art?" asked Pan doubtfully, for he prided himself on his footwear. "I can learn," cried Larklaurel, trying to remove the old shoe by prizing out the nails with a sharp stone, and making Pan blow piercing summonses for aid upon his pipe.

The crone, when called upon to assist, muttered that no good would come of it. She also pointed out that Larklaurel was unprovided with forge, bellows, hammer or iron. Looking vaguely about her, Larklaurel realized that she was far from those appurtenances of farriery which would lighten her task, and with a down-spirited sigh forbore further labour. Furiously Pan drew away, uttering curses upon the maladroitness of the maiden. Angrily the goat-god limped away, calling Vulcan to his aid. Not unaccustomed to the bludgeonings of Fate, Larklaurel wearily turned for her native land.



Now so it happened and thus it happened that the three sisters arrived at Horngrey Castle at the same moment, and preceded by a seneschal and followed by a sentinel they paced their way to the great hall where the Countess waited to give them audience.

Then did Bronzia stand forth, and flinging down the red nightcap of Fergus, King of the Folk of Kerry, she claimed Lord Plantain's hand. However, before the Countess could reply, Aquamarine spoke out the secret name of the Golden Salmon of the Yellow River and claimed the hand of Lord Plantain in her turn. "What fruit have your travels borne, noodle?" said the Countess to Larklaurel, who stood

with hanging head and fiery cheeks, the crone champing and scratching at her side. "Lady, I have failed," she confessed. "I found the god Pan and held his hoof, but had not wherewithal to shoe him, nor indeed could I get his old shoes off."

The Countess gave a signal at which the trumpets blared forth, and thus she spoke: "Long had I hoped that my son Plantain might be preserved from women's wiles and live undistracted from his studies, but the stars and the cards and the magic bones have said that he must wed, and now is the time for me to choose him a wife that I may train her in her duties before I go to rest. The Lady Bronzia hath done that which she had to do; yet is she like to prove hostile to my instructions and to afflict and distract my son with her commands." At these words the haughty Bronzia gave a loud cry and ground the butt of her spear to sawdust on the flagstones.

"Nor," continued the Countess, "does my choice fall upon the Lady Aquamarine, though she also hath done that which she had to do; for she is like to prove lazy in executing my commands and to distract my son with a myriad maidenly wiles." At these words the bewitching Aquamarine swooned gently upon the sentinel.

"Therefore," the Countess ended, "I select the repulsive and inefficient Larklaurel to be a mate for my son, since she is not likely to bear herself proud against my bidding, nor to affect my son otherwise than by driving him still deeper into his studies. Is there a chaplain in the dungeon? Let the nuptial knot be swiftly tied. The marriage can take place by proxy. I will mention to Lord Plantain what has occurred."

Now so it happened and thus it happened that the disesteemed Larklaurel espoused the Lord Plantain and inherited her father's lands, which the Countess, who long survived, farmed so prudently that where they had yielded ten bushels now they yielded a score. And, in the fullness of years, the immured Plantain passed Matric.

R. G. G. PRICE

MACBETH OR LOCAL THANE MAKES GOOD

Through the medium of the Classic Comics (Ivanhoe, Oliver Twist, etc., in full colour, 15 cents each) America leads the world in the presentation of the masterpieces of literature in a brisk and palatable form. We feel it our duty to rally to the support of those of our contemporaries over here who are striving so gallantly to make up Britain's leeway in this important field, and now proudly present our first Classic Comic:—



MACBETH (continued)



Next week—War and Peace, by L. Tolstoi

HE KNEW WHAT HE WANTED

AS he described it, the house sounded simple—the first of my misunderstandings.

He said "Darling, while I finish these last chapters, you go down there for a fortnight and see what you can find. Then I'll come down and search with you. Just remember," he added, "nothing remote; something Integrated, a good mixed area, not all middle-class, not all working-class. Just something Integrated, a social unit."

So I took train for Somerset and the house-hunt.

I went to the agents. At Luke Shedding and Co., Mr. Shedding said "Ah, yes, madam, two three recep, three four bed, kitch, mod con and gar. I think we should suit you," and buzzed for his secretary. The secretary gave me little slips of paper and wished me good morning. It was the same with young Mr. Gillow at Robert Gillow and Son; and at Wilbur and Bankdam I saw neither Mr. Wilbur nor Mr. Bankdam. I took my little slips of paper by bus and tram and taxi and foot and saw many little houses. They were hopeless.

I went back to the agents and made myself awkward with their secretaries. I demanded to see "the gentleman." "Mr. Shedding," I said, "you have my particulars quite incorrectly. These houses I have seen are all quite hopeless." Mr. Shedding said "I don't understand, madam. I have you down here for a Desirable Residence. See for yourself." He handed me a card with *Des Res* written below my name. "Is that not what you want?" I told him no, if that was what I had been seeing. He said "You want something more Unusual then, madam?" He produced the word Unusual much as one might produce the word Roccoco, to indicate a specific style. I said I supposed I did. I mentioned Integration and the social unit. He seemed nonplussed. I said my husband wrote, and liked to meet a variety of people.

"Aha," said Mr. Shedding,

"what you want, madam, is the Motley Throng. Let me see, what have we in the Motley Throng today? Shakespeare," he added, "a great writer of plays."

He drove me off to the Throng, and found it overlooking the docks; a small, prim crescent thrown up into the sky on the edge of a cliff. Mr. Shedding stood in the window-light and proceeded to picture the author at work. I said I thought this particular author would rather be more a part of the Throng, more in touch with it. Mr. Shedding could not at first understand. "But the shops, madam, are only just around the corner." I said it was more a question of meeting a variety of people than of watching them down at the foot of the cliff. Mr. Shedding said "Oh."

In the car he said "May I ask, madam, what type of book your husband writes?" I told him novels. "Romance?" he asked; "Or more the thriller type?" I said perhaps something more serious. "It wouldn't be what you might call the sociological type, would it, madam?" I said it might be what he would, and Mr. Shedding beamed. "Why, madam," he said—"madam, that's a great help. It's not the

Motley Throng we want at all. It's the Hoi Polloi."

He smiled knowingly and took me for another ride. "The Greeks," he said, "had a word for it. Ah, Plato! Ah, the Propositions!" The Hoi Polloi was a vast manse behind the gas-works.

Young Mr. Gillow was fresher but more companionable. "Ah, well," he said, "if it's something Unusual you want . . ." He indicated that life was simple. "I know exactly. A little home away from the bustle, but not too far away. A smoke and a drink after the long day." I told him about Mr. Shedding and the gas-works. "Of course, old Shedding's a bit much cultured," he said. I told him more about Integration, and suddenly he understood. "The very thing," he exclaimed. "What you want, my dear, is more of the Social Swim." I said that might be a way of putting it.

We went out to the car.

"Something with a bit of jollity," he said, "eh?" and placed his arm along the back of my seat while he drove. "It's a nice neighbourhood." "Des?" I asked doubtfully. "Not exactly," he



said. "No, I wouldn't say quite that."

It backed on to a roadhouse. There were cars parked all round it and women in sun-suits. "You're bang-slap in the Swim here," he said. "Jolly little Res. Cute Recep over there. Sun-roof on the Gar. All mod con." There were, however, only three rooms apart from the concealed bar. "Have a drink," he said, "at the local." He was halfway to the roadhouse before I could tell him he had it all wrong. We drove back quietly.

In the end he said "You won't get what you want in brick, madam. It'll have to be a stone house."

I got straight in to see Mr. Wilbur next day by storming into his outer office and saying "I want a stone house. My husband is a writer of sociological novels. We do not want to be cut off, but we do want a stone house." Mr. Wilbur smiled. "It is nice," he said—"it is indeed nice, if I may say so, madam, to meet in times like these a client whose mind is, if I read the signs aright, her own." He ushered me to a chair. "We also deal in antiques," he said and coughed because I eyed him. He laughed slightly. "Stone walls do not, it seems, a prison make," he said. "I will see, madam."

Mr. Wilbur took me to a tall, narrow and lonely house on the south side of the city. It had extremely thick walls. "It was part of a monastery," he explained. "Beautiful stone they used in those

days. Its cells, I believe, are now the domestic offices." Everything faced north and depressed me. I told Mr. Wilbur I was afraid not, because of the aspect. Mr. Wilbur said "You could of course open up the southern aspect, madam." I looked at the walls, thought not and changed my tack. "It is a little remote," I said. He strode across to the window and said "But, madam, you have the whole city spread out in panorama behind those trees. Think of the view in autumn." I said yes, but it was all somewhat distant; we would like to be part of a social unit. Mr. Wilbur understood. "The Social Swim," he said. "No," I said, "not the Social Swim. Rather more of the Motley Throng." Mr. Wilbur said, "O-ho," and drove me back to his filing cabinet.

It took him half an hour to think of the Madding Crowd, and when he did it turned out to be the manse behind the gas-works again.

At seven the next morning Mr. Shedding was at the hotel. He could hardly contain himself. "Madam—at once," he said. "The very thing. A window on to life. The tides of men." I got in with him and we drove for miles. "I have an artist," he said, "much in the position of your husband, offering for the place already. She wishes to paint in the sail-loft. A window on to life." Because of the competition we looked at the sail-loft first. Then we went over the keeling floor and the tarring-shed to the look-out room.

"A superb study," Mr. Shedding said. "The world floats by. A tide in the affairs of men. All the world's a stage." He turned to conjure up his author-at-work. "I can imagine," he said, "the very book your husband will write. The men that go down to the sea in ships. The wet sea and the flying spume. Ah, Milton . . ."

"Thou shouldst . . ." I said.

Mr. Shedding looked uneasy. "Thou shouldst what, madam?" "Oh, only a quotation," I said. Mr. Shedding beamed. "Ah, yes," he said. "Thou shouldst indeed." Back in the car he said "If I may say so, madam, your husband is extremely difficult to suit." I said it appeared so and I was sorry. My husband knew what he wanted and there it was. But Mr. Shedding rallied. "Never fear," he said. "While there's life, eh?"

§ §

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR FORTY

NOW this afternoon we're all going to make a lovely present to take home. People who fidget, Michael, will be standing outside the door and naturally there will be no lovely present for them.

Let me see if I can see two nice children to give out the paper. Don't hold your breath, dears, and don't push out your stomachs like that, Anna and Elizabeth.

Don't touch the paper till I tell you. We don't want dirty marks on our Christmas cards, do we?

Yes, Harold, they're going to be Christmas cards.

DON'T TOUCH!

There now! If you hadn't touched it it wouldn't have fallen down and been trodden on! All put your hands behind your backs, and stop talking!

The fuss!

Everyone ready? Then listen carefully.

Fold your paper over like this and smooth it gently down the crease.

Richard, your hands! Look at that horrid black smear down your card. All show hands!





"We get all types."

What on earth have you boys been doing?

Clearing out what drain?

Miss Judd told you to? I'm sure she told you to wash afterwards as well.

Well, anyway, you should have the sense to do so. Don't quibble! Great children of FIVE, SIX some of you, and not enough common sense to wash before Art.

Very quickly run and wash.

The rest of you can sing a little song while we wait.

What shall it be? No, John, not that one your daddy taught you. Perhaps some other time. Let's have "Bingo."

Very nice. Here come the others. How wet you boys are!

Who threw water over who? Whom? Who?

Well, never mind. Let's get on or these cards won't be ready till NEXT Christmas!

That'll do! That'll do! It wasn't as funny as all that.

All quiet!

Now let me see if the fold is by your left hand. LEFT hand, children. The side by the windows then.

Good! Now don't turn them over or they'll open backwards.

On the front we're going to draw a big fat robin. You can copy mine from the blackboard.

Watch carefully. See how I use up all my space. His head nearly

touches the top and his feet nearly touch the bottom.

Who can do a really beautiful robin? Use your brown crayon and begin.

Run along, Reggie.

All hold up robins. Some are very small. They look more like gnats.

Of course, Michael, yours would be different. Where are you going to put his legs?

A fat lot of good it will be to have them on the next page!

Right. Now shade a nice red patch on his breast like this.

Now inside in the middle we are going to write HAPPY CHRISTMAS and underneath FROM and then your own name.

I shall put FROM MARY on the board but you will put FROM JOHN, or PAT, or MICHAEL, won't you, just YOUR OWN NAME. Do you all understand? Hands up those who don't understand?

Carry on then. Beautiful printing. While you are doing that I shall bring you each a piece of red wool to tie round your card in a lovely bow.

Richard, why have you put FROM MARY? Is your name MARY?

Yes, I know it's on the board, but I explained all that.

Who else has been silly enough to put MARY?

Nearly all of you! Now we shall just have to do them all over again! Another afternoon wasted, and we've got carols to learn, and the school concert to-morrow, and our class party to get ready, and Parents' Afternoon and all the reports to do before the end of the week!

Ah, well! Is that the bell? Lead out to play.

Richard and Joan, collect the Christmas cards and put them all in the waste-paper basket.

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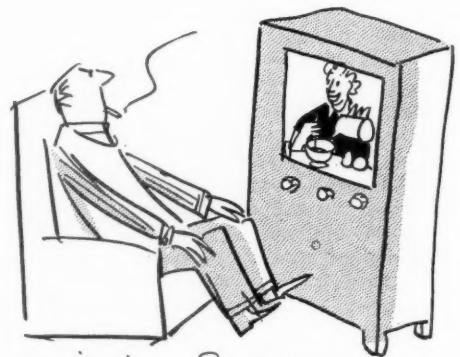
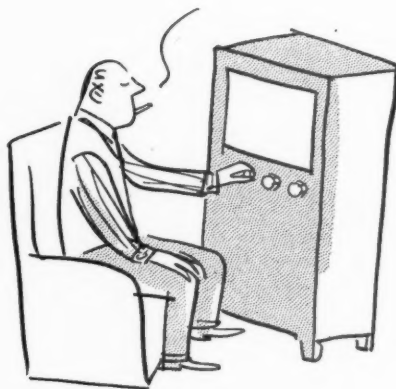
CONFESSION

OF course, it's childish and absurd, But sometimes when the austere Third

Has bidden me a chill Good-night I secretly tune in the Light To hear the kind announcer tell Me to sleep well.



"It seems funny, when you remember that actually we're going the other way."



William Sauter



A Thousand Pounds a Puff!

THERE are those to whom Clapham Junction is like the palm of their hand, Bradshaw as limpid as Æsop, and Robert Stephenson's inspired simplification of the four-eccentric valve gear, by linking two forked gabs to the spindle, a well-loved bedtime story. I do not address myself to these fanatics (and I beg that they will not address themselves to me), but to those other heirs to the railways, who, even after stumping up £850,000,000 for them, still may not know that to enter a full compartment in spite of an occupant's objection may result in a fine (rush-hour travellers, please note), that you can have a special train for 16s. 3d. a mile plus your own fare, but if the whole thing comes to less than £9 6s. the Railway Executive won't look at it, that the locomotive "City of Truro" reached 102 miles an hour in 1904, that—but now read on.

The receipts from your railways are about a million pounds a day, and if you should wonder how they managed to lose money last year, reflect that there are a hundred thousand wagons waiting to be repaired, and that passenger coaches are short of requirements by more than four thousand; the necessary materials—steel principally—are going for export. All the best coal is going overseas too, for other people's railways, and this is one of the reasons (neglect of permanent-way maintenance during the war is another) why trains are slower than they were; you may touch 80 miles an hour to-day at a spot between Grantham and Peterborough, but that is as much as you

can hope for at present. British firemen need all their enginemanship—I borrow the railway word with pleasure—to keep their fires in at all; the miserable stuff they have to use makes less steam, burns faster, goes out quicker and costs more; the 1948 coal bill was £32,000,000 as against £12,000,000 ten years ago, and if that isn't getting on for a thousand pounds a puff my name is Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Talking of smoke, George Stephenson's "Rocket" was one of the first engines to consume its own; that it should do so was a condition of entry for the Rainhill trials which it won handsomely in 1839 at an average speed of 13·8 miles an hour. Before that, and for some time afterwards, the smoke was consumed by the third-class passengers as they bucketed along in open goods-trucks, incurring among other risks that of having their side-whiskers ignited by the stream of cinders from the engine. They were forbidden any other kind of smoke, either in the trains or on the platforms, and if Lord Palmerston, waiting on a West Country station, had read the back of his ticket ("No smoking. No tipping.") he would not have had his cigar snatched from his lips by a disciplinarian porter; it is to be imagined that he learnt his lesson and respected the second part of the instructions.

The porter was lent confidence, no doubt, by his uniform of green plush, the coat and waistcoat edged with scarlet, topped off by a glazed beaver with leather sidestays. The later decline on the Great Western to peaked caps and brown corduroy

was a sad mistake, and led ultimately to the coarse and inelegant costume which—merely a theory of mine—puts to-day's railway servant in a bad temper from the moment he gets up in the morning; it is trying enough to answer silly questions in green plush and a beaver, but no man, and certainly no woman, can love his work in the scabrous inflexibility of railway blue. The railways have lost pomp, that is the trouble. There is still a vestigial nobility in the way a guard mounts the running-board just when the spectator is hoping he's left it too late, but how much nobler the effect when he wore a red frock-coat and a silk hat! In those days the railway policemen flourished the hand signals with carved and figured tipstaves, the engine wheels were of polished oak, the funnels turned back at the top like a half-peeled banana.

The "Rocket" was yellow and black, with a white chimney; Stephenson pretended that he wanted it to look lighter than its four and a half tons—any self-respecting modern engine weighs between seventy and eighty—but I think he wanted it to look bright as well. By comparison the Railway Executive's colour programme of crimson lake and cream for main-line trains, crimson lake without cream for suburban trains and green for electric trains (because they are green already) seems a little sombre. Readers who have seen the "plum-and-spilt-milk" train—the official description—running about somewhere may be sorry to hear that it is only an unsuccessful experiment and will have to come to heel at

its next repainting. Paint is cheap and cheerful, and we ought to be glad that they are painting eleven hundred and sixty-six of our stations this year, but it cannot re-establish unaided the lusty claim to splendour which threw up that monumental granite arch at Euston, or that second Crystal Palace at Paddington; and which caused King's Cross station to be erected in the exact form of the Tsar of Russia's new riding-stables in Moscow (a simple explanation: the architect, Lewis Cubitt, was responsible for both). The effervescent Gothic of Sir Gilbert Scott's St. Pancras was originally designed for the Law Courts, but was no doubt considered too good for them.

Pampered from the outset, first-class passengers probably accepted all this grandeur as their right; railway travel was luxurious for them from the beginning, their own fat-cushioned road coaches being mounted on wagons and the horses accommodated somewhere near, if not actually among, the third-class passengers. A "coach" meant just that, whether on road or rail, and the Stockton & Darlington bought up road coaches and built them end to end in threes and fours, a plan which to-day's coach-builder still adopts in a somewhat refined form. But third-class passengers, herded into pens at the stations, loaded into goods-wagons on the trains, forbidden to seek the services of a porter, must have looked askance at the magnificence of the termini, the splendour of the railway servants and the tasselled snugness of their betters—not least because some of them had probably lost all their money in railway speculation and would but for that have been travelling first-class themselves. During the railway madness of the 1840s there sprang up between two and three thousand companies, many of which collapsed without having raised so much as a single head of steam. A great figure in these affairs was one George Hudson, a Yorkshireman who, having invested a considerable legacy in North Midland Railway shares and thereupon

been eagerly invited to become a director of the company, flung himself wholeheartedly into the promotion of other companies. By 1844 he was in control of more than a thousand miles of line and had earned himself the title of "the railway king," with an inexhaustible procession of investors seeking audience. When he was elected Conservative M.P. for Sunderland in 1845 the news was rushed to London by a special train which at times touched 75 m.p.h. in its race to make the headlines. But Hudson made headlines of a different kind in 1849, when his large but unstable empire collapsed about his ears; and *Punch*, which had long expressed uneasiness about his activities, helped to put a period to them with a cartoon depicting Hudson "Off the Rail." There were songs about the railways, parlour games about the railways, jokes about the railways; in his first year as editor and founder of the *Daily News*, Charles Dickens (in spite of his feelings about Mugby Junction) appointed a Railway Editor. The word "collision" gathered a new and terrible connotation.

Indeed, perhaps the most astonishing thing about the railways is that a world accustomed to regard a coach speed of fifteen miles an hour as the perilous ultimate in daredevil expeditiousness ever accepted them at all. To be wrenched through the smoke-blotted countryside at over twice that speed must have seemed a vicious and unnatural adventure which all the plush suits and glazed beavers in the kingdom could never make either safe or proper. There were, naturally, protests of all kinds and from all sources, including the Duke of Wellington's harsh warning of the ease with which Radicals would be able to move from one part of the country to another, but all were rolled flat under the rushing, iron-bound wheels; such is the human lust for progress that when at the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1830 the

"Rocket" rolled flat an esteemed Member of Parliament, popular attention fixed itself less on the mishap than on the rate of thirty-six miles an hour at which George Stephenson drove the injured gentleman home to die. The speed age had begun.

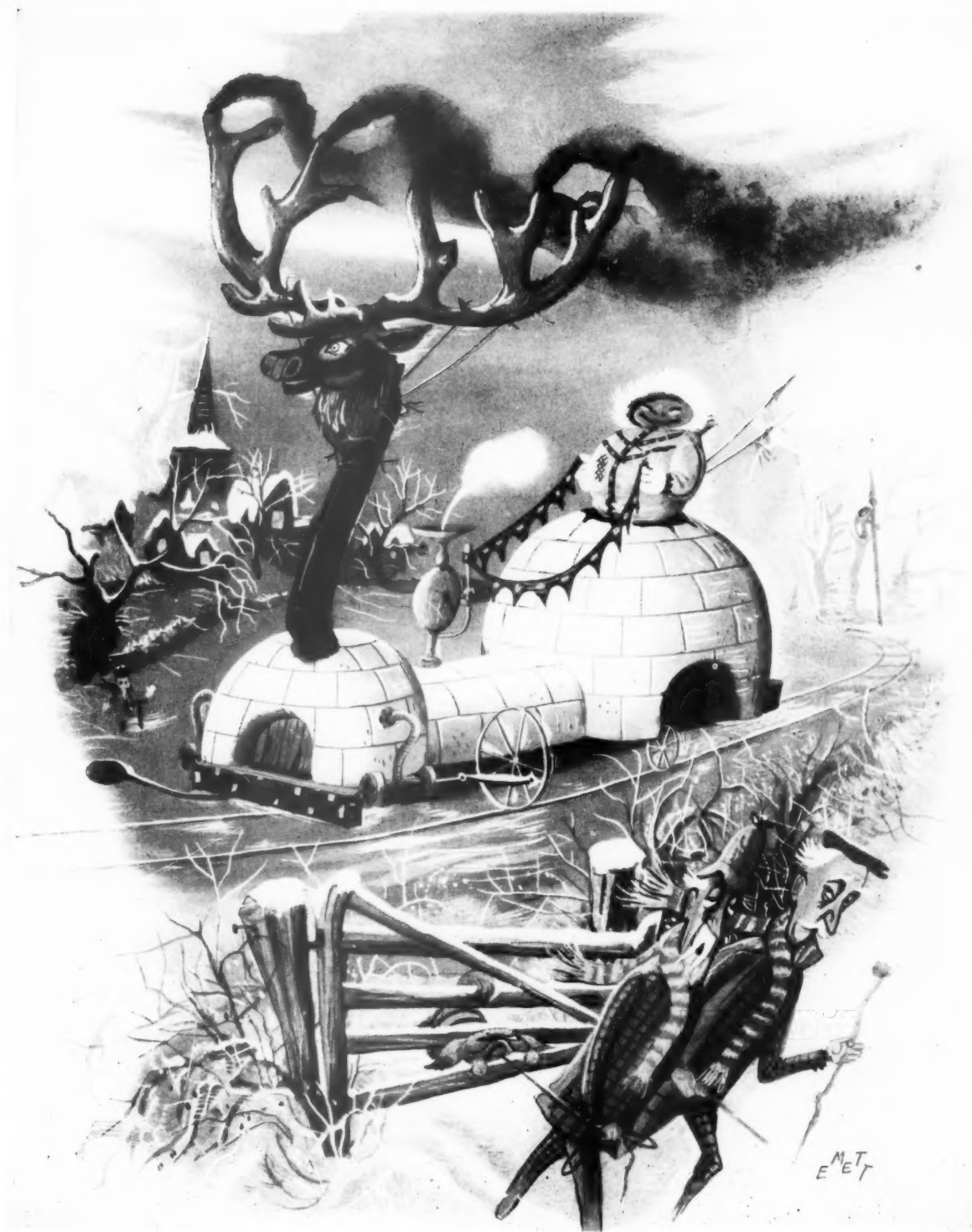


From the first the State had to have a hand in such a gigantic business; Parliamentary approval had to be obtained for every new company floated, and in 1843 sanction was given for the raising of four and a half millions; in 1846, one hundred and thirty-one millions. (In 1948, eight hundred and fifty millions.) After the first Great War there were still more than one hundred and twenty independent companies, until they were amalgamated into four by the 1923 Act. Mr. Gladstone's Cheap Trains Act of 1845 was perhaps the first measure to do anything very much for the third-class passenger; it stipulated that every company must run over its lines at least once a day a train with penny-a-mile, third-class accommodation (with roofs), stopping at all stations and travelling at not less than fifteen miles an hour. To-day's third-class travel costs 2.44d. a mile; it seems a lot, but what else costs only two and a half times what it did a hundred years ago?

A few last dips into my brantub of research reveal that you can buy an old passenger-coach for about twenty pounds, but it's up to you to get it shifted into the middle of your allotment; that when Queen Victoria made her first railway journey her coachman demanded to drive the train, but was consoled with a ride on the pilot engine in front, which covered his livery with soot; that you own 7,000 railway horses and 700,000 other railway servants; that the "Rocket" ran four miles in four minutes in 1838; and that an earlier attempt at a locomotive, Mr. Wm. Brunton's "Mechanical Traveller," derived its motion from a pair of steam legs which remorselessly shoved it along from behind.

J. B. BOOTHROYD





"I've heard of foreign visitors bringing their own CARS over, but . . ."



NOSTALGIA

YOU loved them too: those locos motley gay
That once seemed permanent as their own way?—
The Midland "lake," the Caledonia blue;
The Brighton "Stroudleys" in their umber hue;
North Western "Jumbos," shimmering black,
That sped, shrill-whistled, on their "Premier" track;
And all a forest's tints of green—G.C.,
G.N., G.W., L.T.S., H.B.,
South Western, Highland, "Chatham": many more
Both on our own and on the Emerald shore?
Did you, beneath a sooty Oldham sky,
Think dour the "Aspinalls" of L. and Y.,
Or, in the gloom of the Five Towns, admire
The cheerful, sturdy, red North Staffordshire?
Do you remember how the Suffolk sun
Gleamed on a blue Great Eastern "Hamilton"?
In Wessex did you keep slow company
With the "tanks" (royal) of the S. and D.,
That waited, as it seemed, for crack of doom
(While they performed strange rites) at Templecombe?
Across the Fens and Broadland did you reach,
And come—in course of time—to Cromer (Beach)
Behind a khaki M. and G.N.J.,
And was the "pea soup" to your liking—say!—
Of the N.B. that took us over Forth
On our first wizard journey Further North?

The Johnson "singles," Drummond 4-4-0's!
Were ever engines lovelier than those?
What treasured names they bore—*Sir Francis Drake*,
Swallow, *Lysander*, *Lady of the Lake*,
Courier, *Gladstone*, *Glowworm*, *Lorna Doone*,
Titan, *Apollo*, *Jeanie Deans*, *Typhoon* . . .
And in their wake what rainbow splendour ran:
The bronze-green coaches of the Cambrian;
G.N.S. red and white; North Eastern "plum";
"Salmon" that struck one young observer dumb
At grim old Waterloo; the varnished teak
That, North or South, was never far to seek,



But had for apogee East Coast Joint Stock
That left King's Cross each morning, ten o'clock—
Though many held this did not equal quite
The West Coast purple-brown and (spilt-milk) white.

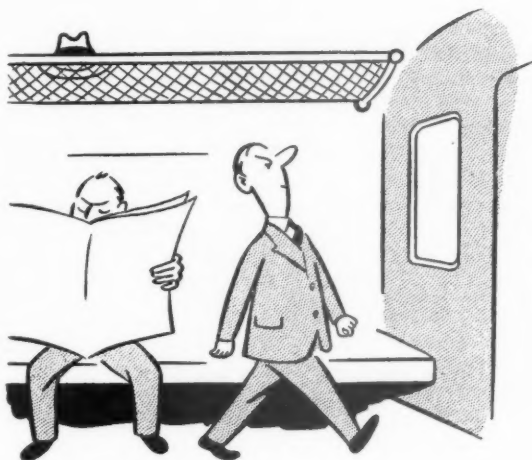
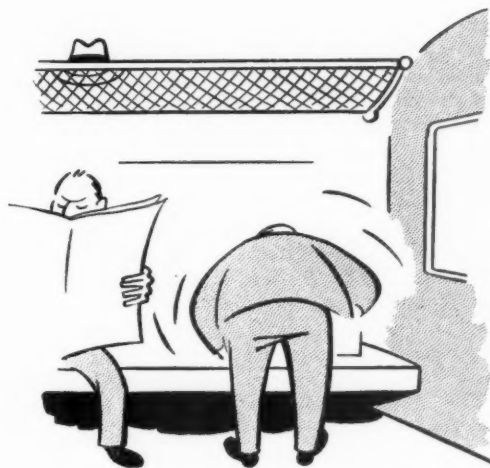
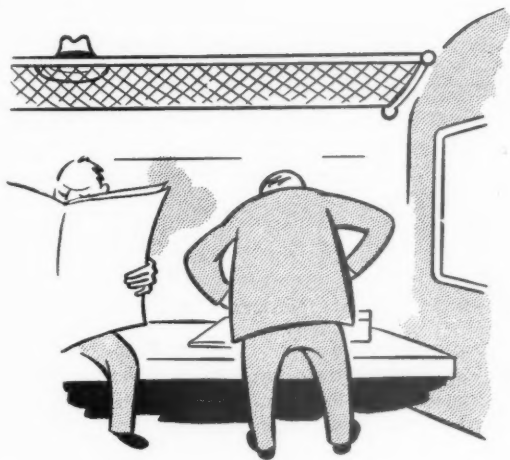
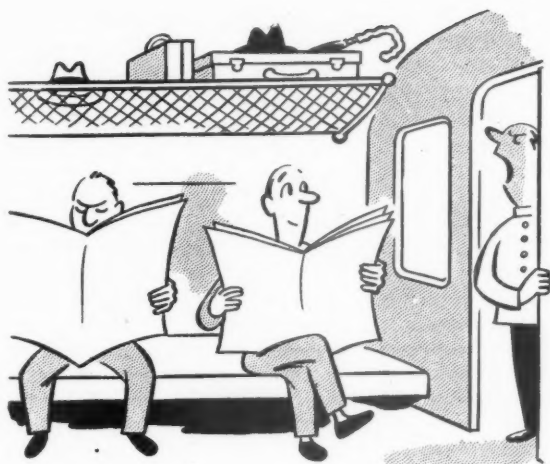
Those Furness trains—red, white, and blue—at Grange?
That "orange" touch at Manchester (Exchange);
At Central the dark oak of Cheshire Lines?
Or—what the memory most of all enshrines:
The crown and consummation of our dreams!—
Those great "joint" hubs where many colour-schemes
Converged to hold us under such a spell:
York, Cambridge, Perth, or Carlisle (Citadel)? . . .
The high "bird-cages" of L.C. and D.?
Those dismal Broad Street arks one used to see
Above one ere (in hardly prouder state!)
One trundled up the bank at Bishopgate? . . .
Those little Emmett lines which "also ran,"
Saucily mocking at the march of man—
Festiniog, Southwold, Wantage, Isle of Wight,
Lynton and Barnstaple, East Suffolk Light? . . .
Yes, I remember! But I will not flog
My muse to furnish the whole catalogue.

"Each to his choice." Although my youth was bred
Amid the comfortable Midland red,
And though for long, wherever I might roam,
M.R. to me spelled certitude and home,
Yet all my exiled Western blood took fire
When—a small boy, in snowy-starched attire—
I first changed trains at Bristol (Temple Meads).
Awhile my tastes were fickle; but the seeds
Sown there have proved the stubbornest by far:
Upon my heart is graved G.W.R.
And when I came to live near Brunel's wall,
Between the red cliffs and the rise and fall
Of Devon waves, I thought long years to see,
In ever-more-familiar livery,
The "Dutchman" or the "Limited" swing by,
Washed by the Channel spray.

Hope born to die!



BACKSTAGE



DINING-CAR

WHEN next I take my thirteen-fourteenths of a pennyworth of meat in a railway dining-car—it is more likely to be a shred of turbot, but no matter—I shall muse upon the complex machinery set in motion to get the meat, or the turbot, to my plate.

Like so many of us in a jaunty, a recklessly gay, fellowship, I had taken dining-car meals for granted. Some anti-social folk prefer to bite the furtive sandwich or to juggle with a vacuum flask behind closed compartment doors. We—and I speak for you, my fellow-revellers—we will have nothing of this. We prefer to swagger through the corridors, to trip over the occasional bag, to coil ourselves about the corridor-loungers (an odd race that stands, nose to window, for several hundred miles), and to dive at last through the kitchen-steam to a restaurant car's milk-and-honey. Admirable; but until the other day I had no idea how the milk-and-honey arrived.

There is a certain excitement about eating in transit that we miss at home or in a motionless restaurant. If you are in the mood, a flake of cod and a water-ice taken on the lunge between Taunton and Exeter can be worth the entire works of Mrs. Beeton. We lost these pleasures during the war when the authorities ran what they called, politely, an Abridged Service. For sixteen months or so in 1944-45 the cars vanished entirely. Still, for nearly four years now the Full Service has been in operation again. It "builds up" rapidly. To-day, so it seems, you can have your four-tenths of an ounce of butter and—if you are at breakfast—your one-seventh of an ounce of bacon (only one-fifty-sixth if it is a "light meal") on any main line between, roughly, Helmsdale and Penzance, or Dover and the Kyle of Lochalsh.

I warn you not to sift that passage too precisely. The trouble is that we cannot generalize about eating in trains. Every dining-car has its special problem, and these problems merge into one great headache that must continually crinkle the brows of the Hotels Executive and the various regional offices.

Catering is, of course, the first trouble. Emissaries from the Hotels Executive can, and do, swoop daily from Marylebone—where they live, appropriately, on the fifth floor of a converted hotel—to the markets at Covent Garden and Billingsgate. But the romantic dining-cars (advt.) and the matter-of-course restaurants of the town endure the same catering restrictions. You, my fellow-swaggerers, men who have spilt many a black coffee with me near Bridgwater, or up in the Fylde, or down near Doublebois—you may not realize that when you sit at a meal in what Mr. O'Casey, or someone like him, has called "th'reckless rush" of a diner, you are bound by the sternest rules. Three dishes only: we know that one, but do all of us know our "entitlements"? Do we know that the Ministry of Food confines us to five-thirty-seconds of an ounce of sugar, to thirteen-fourteenths of a pennyworth of meat, and (though I am quite unable to tell you what this means) to one-fourteenth of an ounce of cheese less seventeen-and-a-half per cent? You may think you are banqueting. Not at all. You live on vulgar fractions and the odd decimal or so, and that is why the Hotels Executive—genial, benevolent, and fond of good life as it is—cannot help offering you fish when you have expected a sirloin, or (as you tilt the teapot) reflecting morosely that to gain an entitlement of one pound of tea it must serve 280 cups of "hot beverages."

The Executive does its best. Its members shed a tear as they

consider the meagreness of the times. They cheer themselves and us with melon (occasionally) or iced tomato juice (now and then); they do what they can with poultry; and they mourn that in this sea-girt isle the Briton should be so oddly averse from fish. Pity the Executive. It has a good deal more on its plate than we have. Last year the travelling public—you, that is—consumed some twelve million meals in some five hundred restaurant-cars. And the number of cars and the number of meals are growing while the Ministry of Food still keeps a gloomy eye on "entitlements" and works out the fractions with slide-rule and abacus. You can be sure at least that the Hotels Executive toils very hard for you. It sympathizes with your dislike of a standard printed menu that can never go into detail. On a few special trains—the "Cornish Riviera" express is one—you do know what you are going to have; but, as a rule, you must wait hopefully for the arrival of the balancing, swaying athletes disguised as waiters.

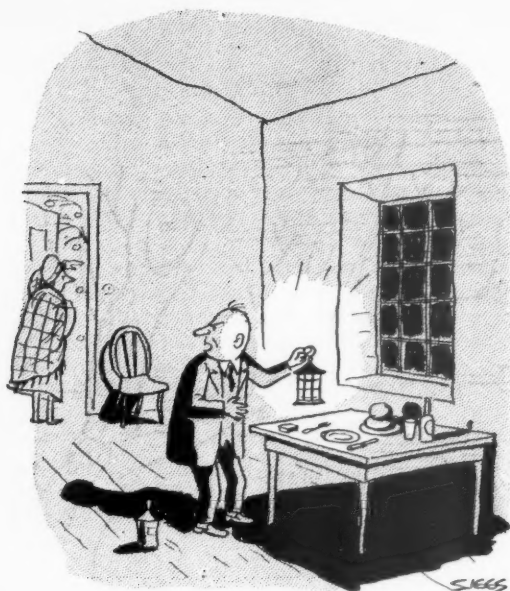
There are certain eccentricities. Tavern-cars, which tend to be ingle-nooked and Olde Englysshe, have had a poor Press; but then their design and adornment are not for the Hotels Executive—and in any case we are concerned here with dining, not tipping. There is nothing Olde Englysshe, heaven knows, about the ordinary dining-car, or its fare; unless it be the dauntless optimism of the diners. So let us all be gay together and shout confusion to the Ministry of Food until the glasses dance on the table and the gentleman-in-the-wing-collar opposite shoots his tomato soup, with a joyful plop, over carafe, cruet, and our precious entitlement of butter. Did I tell you? Four-tenths of an ounce per head per meal. J. C. TREWIN



End of The Railway Charivari



"... and would you mind hurrying? My skates are getting rusty."



"If ever the young scoundrel does come back, he can have the job of putting this damn lamp in the window every night."

LADY OF TAUNTON

THE tower is of course especially wonderful when the sun gives it the warmth of a welcome home, but such is the colour of the stone itself that it seems to store sunlight even when the sky is grey.

To our eyes the tower had from the beginning the feminine grace and glory of its name. Mary Magdalene seems a strange saint for the smugly smiling Somerset market town, with its soft airs and voices, its distaste for hurry and its gentle setting between the hills and coombs of the Quantocks. The traditional Magdalene, the red-haired beautiful outcast, squandering the harlot's treasure in one passionate gesture of devoted homage, would probably have roused at least as much hostility in respectable Taunton circles as she did in Palestine. Yet for us, and for always, Taunton is her town, and something of her clear spirit and warm heart is in the very stone of her church. It is never wholly cold, that glowing stone.

She dominated our childhood, exactly as her statue dominates her church, her tower the town. She

was a kindly Lady to us who gathered every Sunday at her feet.

Oh, yes, we were compelled to go. Most parsons' children are. We recollect no objection, then or since, to the enforced church-going we endured. We sat, facing her statue, under the soldiers' window, next to the live red-coated soldiers from the barracks where my father was chaplain. We liked the soldiers in the window, led by a shining St. Michael, but we liked the red-coats even more. We enjoyed the scent of their leather and pipe-clay and we admired and envied the games of cards they played during the Litany. Performing what my father called "a Protestant hunker-forward," they would play their hands and pass their winnings while we hoped to be invited to join them.

We never were. But when, during Sunday dinner, we discussed this happy plan for whiling away Litanies, my father laughed. He said that the service was too long for soldiers and children and therefore after he instituted a short soldiers'

service to which we were allowed to go. We missed the card-games, but we enjoyed a proper military band and the thrilling sound of men's voices singing hymns they really knew. We never discovered whether my father wished to benefit the soldiers or his children when he undertook to add to his already heavy Sunday duties.

After the service there was a military parade in the square in front of the church, with elegant subalterns all scarlet and swords and most impressive gloves. We watched with happy awe, elated by the ordered movement, by the magnificence of colour and command. When, once, a decrepit donkey-cart turned the corner and advanced upon the assembled troops we were scandalized to hear my mother laugh as she said: "Look, the enemy!" We regarded the soldiers as in some sort ours, for not only were we privileged to take part in their service, but the barracks were next our home and our days were punctuated by bugle-calls.

But such was the splendour of military dress in those days that there could be church parade only on fine Sundays. No rain must spot those white gloves nor rust those bright swords.

So, on wet Sundays, we had to go to the grown-up service again, to the long Litany, to the superb incomprehensibility of the Athanasian Creed, to the leisurely ease of the sermon. The stone statue of the Lady with her oil of spikenard, very precious, confronted us and drew our eyes and dreams.

Maybe it was not a very good statue, being a sentimental, rather characterless piece of work. But children are not fussy about art. Give them a life-size statue with a known name and story and something rich and strange is theirs for ever. Sunday after Sunday, all the seasons through, she stood there, watching over our hopes, our griefs, our laughter, our fumbling prayers. She had, we knew, seen soldiers play games—and draw lots. She had seen children run to welcoming arms. She wove herself into our lives. We

did not then know how surely and how permanently.

We knew her story well. It soaked into our hearts as we watched her statue during those long litanies. We had no notion how she was a sinner, but we knew that she had been first in the Resurrection garden. We had heard my father describe it in an Easter sermon, when he had brought a quite remarkable horticultural display into his eloquent account of the Gospel events.

A gardening friend told him that the flowers he had been unwise enough to name could not all have been blooming at the same time anywhere in the world. She strongly doubted whether any of them grew in Palestine at all. If they did they would not flower at Easter.

We resented this criticism, which we regarded as despicably niggling, but my father was perfectly cheerful and said he didn't know what the flowers were except that their names sounded good. The friend was shocked, both as a gardener and a churchwoman.

We weren't. We agreed with the preacher that the names were like music and made a fit setting for the Lady with her red hair and her tears of joy.

Even when we were not in church she could not be forgotten. When, at the hours, we heard "The Bluebells of Scotland" or "The Last Rose of Summer" shaken out into the air about her tower, the tunes seemed like her voice. In the clamour of the full peal she seemed to be trying to rouse the sleepy town to her own passionate surrender to life.

We had, happily, no prevision nor forward-looking thoughts, but now it seems strangely fortunate that we, whose lives were to be entirely dominated by real wars and all-weather soldiership, should have spent our childhood under the sway of that particular saint.

Try as we would—and did—we never escaped her again. She has always been there, inexorably leading through the toil and tears to that garden where the flowers spring miraculous to greet the Easter dawn.

THE BEST DAYS

"YOUR old days 'll be your best days,"

The gipsy woman said,

A patched old soldier's coat she wore,

And a bright scarf round her head,

Her face was tanned like an old saddle,

Her lips were close and wise,

And the knowledge of the ancient East

Was in her sloe-dark eyes.

"Oh, youth it is a pleasant time

When the blood's quick in the veins,

But ah! its grief is cruel hard,

Its pains they're bitter pains;

Its sorrow clouds the brightest day,

Its tears put out the sun,

For there's no trouble like young trouble,

Since this old world begun.

"But the years they bring forgetting,

The years they cure your woes,

For time it is a healing herb

As any herb that grows,

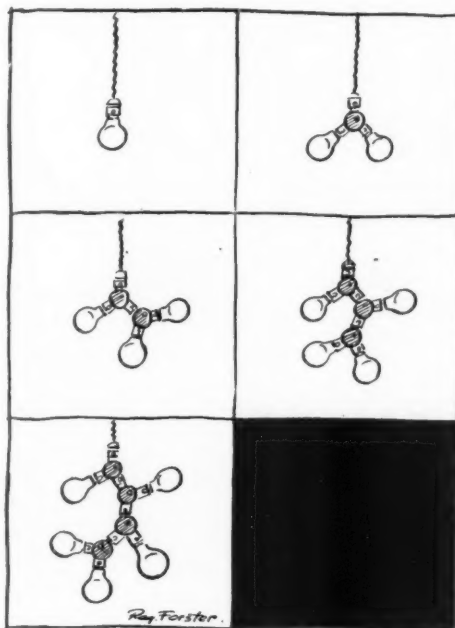
So spend your youth, my lucky lad,

Go spend it how you will,

But your old days 'll be your best days,

When you have spent your fill."

C. FOX SMITH



MY FRIEND PREFERS

"FUNNY thing," said Theodore, searching in his pockets. "I'll have it in a minute."

"That's all right, sir," said the ticket-collector. "There's no hurry. Very few passengers this evening."

"Did you ever," Theodore asked chattily, "hear the story of the man who travelled under the seat?"

The ticket-collector asked which one was that?

"It was probably the first funny story I was ever told," said Theodore. "I've never forgotten it. Two men were travelling together from Paddington to Taunton and had a compartment to themselves. When they heard the ticket-collector coming along the corridor, as it might be you, one said to the other 'Here's the ticket-collector. Got the tickets?' and the other replied 'I've got mine.'"

"'You've got them both,' said the first chap, and the other said No, he hadn't."

"They argued it this way and that, and it appeared that one of them had bought both the tickets and had passed one back along the window-sill of the booking-office for his friend to pick up. But his friend hadn't been behind him at all. Somebody else must have taken it."

The ticket-collector clicked sympathetically while Theodore went through his pockets a second time.

"Very awkward," said Theodore. "Neither of them was prepared to pay for a third ticket, and in any case they had no money left. So it was decided that the one who had not bought the tickets should hide under the seat. I don't know if you have ever tried that?"

The ticket-collector said that he had not.

"No more have I," said Theodore. "But there's not much room, as you can see. The other chap had to force him in with his feet. It was winter too, just such a day as this as I understand it, bitterly cold and the wind in the East."

"Ah," said the ticket-collector acutely. "So the heating was on."

"Full blast. And of course he had to keep his overcoat on. He couldn't breathe much, naturally, in the confined space, but whenever he did take a small breath he was in danger of inhaling a good deal of dust, not to mention cobwebs and such. There was orange-peel as well, I suppose, ash, cigarette-ends, toffee papers . . ."

"Ah," said the ticket-collector.

"It's wonderful the stuff they find under them seats."

"It must be," said Theodore, standing up and hauling his heavy overcoat down from the rack. "Well, then, this poor chap must have been pretty well at his last gasp, I suppose, by the time the ticket-collector arrived at their compartment. And what do you suppose happened?"

The ticket-collector scratched his chin and said he didn't know.

"I'm surprised," said Theodore, "that a ticket-collector of your long service and experience should never have heard of this. On this very line too. What happened was that the man held up two tickets."

"Two tickets?"

"Two tickets. The ticket-collector looked at them and looked at the man and looked all round the compartment and said, just as you said then, 'Two tickets?' and the man said, 'Yes, there are two of us—but my friend prefers to travel under the seat.'"

Those of us who have had to suffer this story from Theodore through the years have long since forbidden him ever to mention it in our hearing; but evidently it amused the ticket-collector, who, according to Theodore, leaned against the side of the door and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. I think even Theodore must have been surprised by such a gratifying reception of his story.

When the merriment was over and he had gone through all his pockets a third time he happened to shake out his muffler, which had been lying beside him on the seat.

"Why," he said, "there we are all the time! I thought I couldn't have lost it."

The ticket-collector looked mystified, poised his clippers irresolutely.

"Two tickets, sir?" he said in tones of surprise.

Theodore's reply was a piercing scream, which caused the ticket-collector to step backwards hurriedly into the corridor.

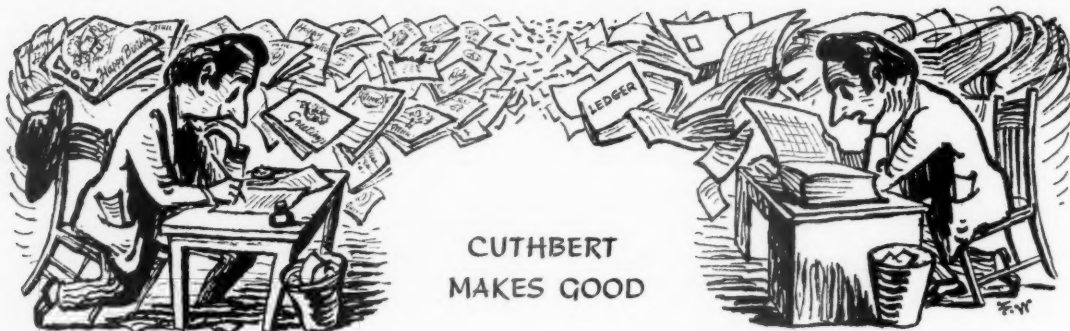
I had managed to bite him in the ankle.



"Must we have the television and the radio on, dear?"



"... and bridge for those who prefer it ..."



CHAPTER I

BESIDE a door marked "Inquiries" stood a young man, wide-brimmed black hat in hand, a sheaf of manuscript bulging from his shabby pocket. Outside the City traffic roared, behind him the lift clanged incessantly and footsteps hurried down the tiled corridors.

Cuthbert Smith paused a moment to find the handle and drop his hat; and it will be as well if we, too, pause to learn who he was and what he was doing outside the offices of Messrs. Hogg and Trimble, Chartered Accountants.

Briefly, then, Cuthbert was a poet who composed verses for greetings-cards; at least, he had been until yesterday, when he wrote:

*These two happy little Blue Birds
Are winging their way,
In their Beaks the true words,
"Many Happy Returns, dear Uncle/Aunt/Wife/
etc., of your/our Wedding Day!"*

and got fired for not scanning. It was obviously a trumped-up excuse, but that did not alter the fact that Cuthbert would have to look for another job or starve;



and this morning, on receiving the Editor's curt letter, he had impulsively raced downstairs from his Bloomsbury attic and boarded a bus to the block of offices that housed his ex-employers' biggest rival.

And now, after a desperate search round the corridors, Cuthbert had reached a possible door and was standing at the counter.

"Mr. Smith?" said a pretty girl, leading him to a large room in which Cuthbert, who knew almost nothing about offices, was interested to see a huge desk empty but for three telephones, an inkstand, a cigarette-box, a number of mahogany trays, a vase of chrysanthemums, four framed photographs, a greengrocer's bag, a detective novel and half a bun.

"Ah," said the managing director, "so you want a job, hey?"

"Yes, please," said Cuthbert, who had worked out a casual approach, "I've done this sort of thing for ages, you see, and I thought, you see—"

"Hum!" said the managing director, picking up a telephone, scribbling something and pressing a bell.

It was not until ten minutes later, sitting at the desk assigned him in a corner of the outer office, that Cuthbert saw from a letter-heading where he was. Still, he reflected another ten minutes later, a job was a job.

"Everything O.K.?" asked a big kindly man who passed him, carrying a pile of ledgers and a ready reckoner.

"Yes, thank you," said Cuthbert, hastily opening a book on Company Law and looking up from it with an answering grin that concealed a sinking heart.

"Can you fix a window-cord?" asked the big man. "One of the ones you wind round a hook that go over a ratchet and sometimes bust?"

Cuthbert nodded eagerly.

"Point is, we haven't got a ladder," said the big man. "Or a new cord. Still, come and see for yourself."

Thus it was that Cuthbert's first morning with Messrs. Hogg and Trimble passed swiftly and pleasantly. He crashed through a waste-paper basket, drank some cold tea, promised to bring a new cord back from lunch and found that he lived in the next street to somebody's cousin. The afternoon was little less than a triumph. By four the new cord was in place and he was sitting drinking more cold tea and being told the plot of the

latest film. By four-thirty, at the big man's suggestion, he was on his way home, his heart aglow with the camaraderie of the business world.

CHAPTER II

It was, however, with some misgivings that Cuthbert slipped into his desk next morning and began opening and shutting drawers as if he knew what he was looking for. Yesterday had been no more than an agreeable preliminary; to-day was the test. And here was a bald man with pince-nez approaching him with a hideous deliberation.

"Mr. Smith?" he asked. "My name is Hill. I have brought you these," and he deposited three leather-bound folios. "As from now on they will be your concern."

"What nice bindings!" said Cuthbert, opening one.

"You will notice, perhaps, a few peculiarities of our particular system," said Mr. Hill.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" cried Cuthbert. "I can see them already. Aren't they peculiar?"

"This, for instance——" Mr. Hill began, pointing with a ruler.

"Rather!" said Cuthbert. "Don't you think, though, Mr. Hill, that I'd better have a good look at them myself first—a good long look, say the whole of to-day?"

Mr. Hill eyed him oddly and hesitated. Cuthbert went pale. Did the old boy suspect anything?

"I was wondering," said Mr. Hill, "if you had such a thing as a spare cigarette."

"Not actually," said Cuthbert, jumping up, "but I could easily run out and get you some."

The news spread from desk to desk, and Cuthbert left the office with a dozen commissions. By the time he got back—he had been to a little grocer's his grandmother dealt with in Richmond—everyone was packing up for lunch, but it was agreed as he emptied his pockets that he had brought off a remarkable coup.

"If you've got an hour this afternoon," said the big man, "you might lend a hand with some ruling. I always sort of join the ruler to the ink."

"Oh, and Mr. Smith," said a very pretty girl indeed, "as you haven't really started yet I'm sure you wouldn't mind answering the telephones to-morrow of the people who've got their Saturdays off?"

"The person who does the telephones makes the tea," said a voice.

Life at Messrs. Hogg and Trimble's, Cuthbert reflected as he picked up his hat for lunch, might well turn out a snip.

CHAPTER III

It says much for Cuthbert that he spent the weekend in his attic feverishly studying everything that his meagre library could offer in connection with chartered accountancy. All he could find was a page of accounts in an old school magazine, but these he read like mad, noting especially the bit put in at the bottom of one column to make it the same as the other column. He noted also that J. Tukes had gone to Kenya and the gymnasium had new parallel bars.

The rain beat on his little window; he could just see the leafless tops of the plane-trees. The poetic mood, the old yearning was upon him.

*Yuletide is here!
Season of Good Cheer!
Hark! the bells ring
Gladness and merry joy to bring!*

With a sigh he threw down his pencil. He was a poet no longer. He must remember that. Seizing the magazine again, he bent his mind to a very queer balance-sheet where every liability seemed an asset.

CHAPTER IV

Monday and Tuesday went by easily enough. Mr. Hill was away with influenza, which helped, and at ten-thirty on Monday morning the office-boy burnt a hole in the kettle. Cuthbert begged that, rather than that the office should spend money on a new one, he might be allowed to slip home for his soldering outfit, with which he did a surprisingly good job, the kettle lasting until ten-thirty on the following morning. The





re-soldering took the rest of Tuesday, and he turned up on Wednesday in good heart, only to find that the blow had fallen.

"We're going on an audit," said the big man, whose name was Hopkins. "Hill's still away, so you're coming with Brown and me."

There was no time to think, let alone to master the principles of auditing. Grasping his wide-brimmed hat, Cuthbert ran after his colleagues. From the cubby-hole by the filing came a hiss and a great cloud of steam. The solder had fallen out of the kettle again . . .

CHAPTER V

The destination of the three auditors proved to be a magnificent building in the heart of Mayfair, and they were soon installed in a fine room furnished with priceless antiques. The most beautiful girl he had ever seen appeared with three cups of tea.

"I'm sorry it's so weak," she said with a devastating smile, "but we only just have enough for to-day until to-morrow."

"Couldn't I go—" Cuthbert began, his ration book already in his hand; but a frown from Hopkins checked him. There was to be no escape. Already a huge fawn-suited man smoking a cigar was leaning on the table explaining the intricacies of the job before them.

"Whenever my boys add anything up they get the answer different," he was saying. "Different from last time and different from each other. That's our real trouble. Well, gentlemen, I leave you to it."

It was obviously a mammoth task. Account-books, ledgers, memorandum pads and the backs of old envelopes littered the table. Seeing that Brown and Hopkins were already engrossed in a little blue book called *My Friends' Numbers*, Cuthbert quietly took up the biggest ledger and began copying it out.

Three days later Cuthbert was still copying the ledger and at the other end of the table Brown, Hopkins and the fawn-suited man were deep in conference.

"There is a discrepancy of twenty-five thousand pounds," said Hopkins. "Frankly, sir, it's puzzling."

Cuthbert looked up. "Did you say twenty-five thousand?" he asked, trying to keep his voice level.

"I did," said Hopkins shortly.

"Well, then, that's just right. Look!" And he turned the ledger back to an entry which read:

7/3/49. Borrowed by H. S. R. £12,000 12s. 6d.

"You see?" he cried. "Add it to this entry here—" and he turned the page to show them the following:

8/3/49. Borrowed by H. S. R. £12,999 7s. 6d.

"—and you get exactly the amount missing!"

"Well!" gasped the fawn-suited man. "That must be—"

"One moment!" Cuthbert's tone was now one of quiet authority. "This H. S. R. didn't pay the money back?"

"He couldn't have," said the other. "It would be Mr. Robinson, and I remember now that he left quite suddenly on the ninth. I remember because it was my birthday. Goodness me, fancy taking all that money! I must say I'm very glad he's gone."

"Well," said Hopkins, "our job is over."

"I want a word with you," said the fawn-suited man to Cuthbert. "You strike me as a bright young chap. Besides, I noticed your hat. Are you a poet?"

"Actually, I am," said Cuthbert.

"Not, perhaps, interested in the greetings-card business?"

"As it happens, yes," said our hero.

"Well, I'm thinking of starting one as a sideline. You wouldn't care to rough me something out?"

"I should be delighted," said Cuthbert, sitting down.

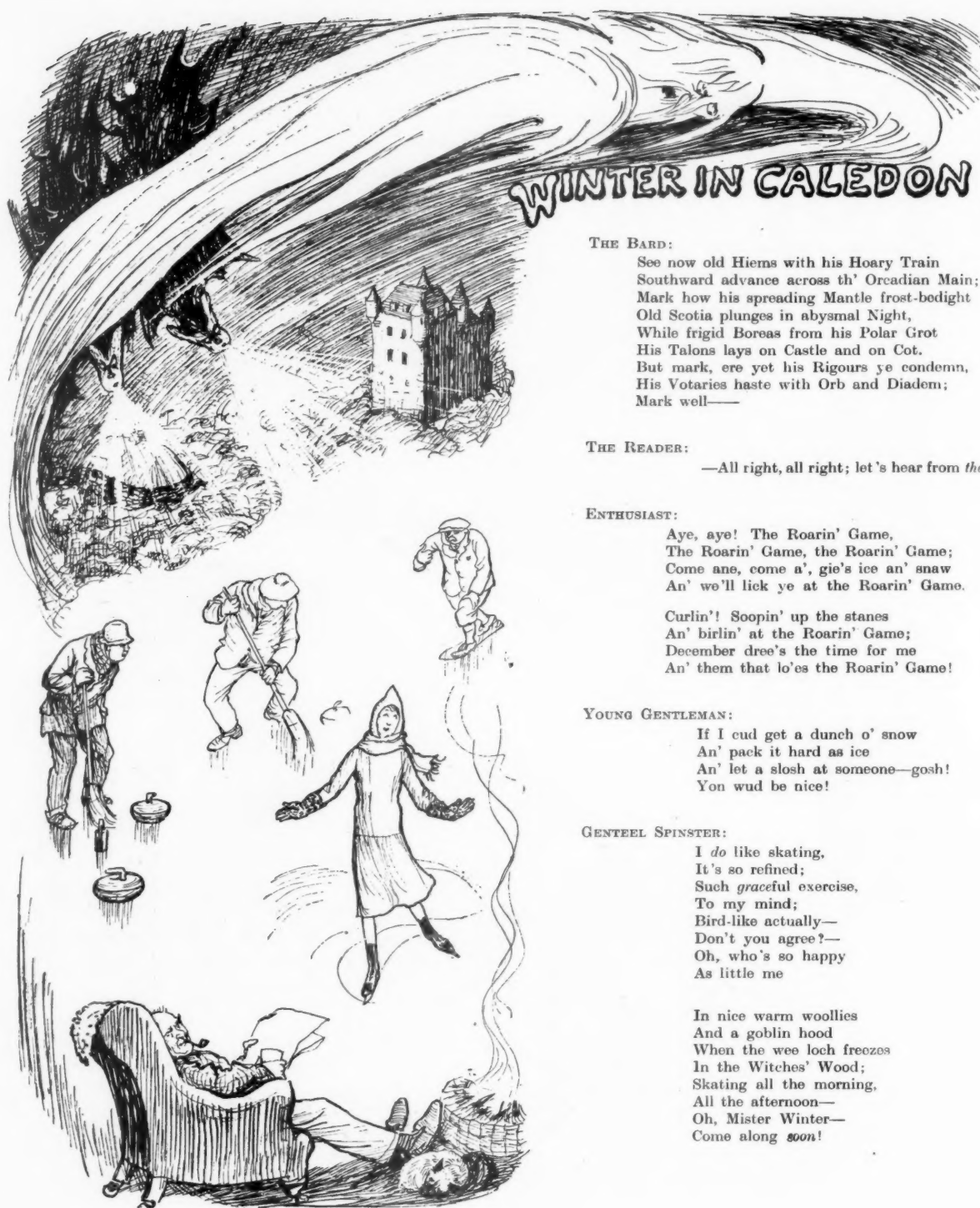
"Oh, Daddy," said the beautiful girl, who had entered silently and was reading over Cuthbert's shoulder, "just listen to this perfectly lovely poem! *These two happy little Blue Birds . . .*"

ANDE





"You don't see many horses on the road these days."



WINTER IN CALEDON

THE BARD:

See now old Hiems with his Hoary Train
Southward advance across th' Orcadian Main;
Mark how his spreading Mantle frost-bedight
Old Scotia plunges in abysmal Night,
While frigid Boreas from his Polar Grot
His Talons lays on Castle and on Cot.
But mark, ere yet his Rigours ye condemn,
His Votaries haste with Orb and Diadem;
Mark well—

THE READER:

—All right, all right; let's hear from *them*.

ENTHUSIAST:

Aye, aye! The Roarin' Game,
The Roarin' Game, the Roarin' Game;
Come ane, come a', gie's ice an' snaw
An' we'll lick ye at the Roarin' Game.

Curlin'! Soopin' up the stanes
An' birlin' at the Roarin' Game;
December dree's the time for me
An' them that lo'es the Roarin' Game!

YOUNG GENTLEMAN:

If I cud get a dunch o' snow
An' pack it hard as ice
An' let a slosh at someone—gosh!
Yon wud be nice!

GENTEEL SPINSTER:

I *do* like skating,
It's so refined;
Such *graceful* exercise,
To my mind;
Bird-like actually—
Don't you agree?—
Oh, who's so happy
As little me

In nice warm woollies
And a goblin hood
When the wee loch freezes
In the Witches' Wood;
Skating all the morning,
All the afternoon—
Oh, Mister Winter—
Come along *soon*!

SEASIDE CURMUDGEON:

Winter means pipes and slippers,
Toasting at the fire like kippers
And—no trippers.

THE READER:

There now! You see what happens once you start 'em.
Do the Ayes have it? *Audi alteram partem.*

TRAWLER SKIPPER:

I wunner t' hear ye. Ye gowks, when ye stand there an' bawl
O' the pleasures o' winter, d'ye think o' me shootin' a trawl?
In a wind out o' Norway wud perish ye foreways an' aft
An' the boatie beneath ye fair tryin' t' dance hersel' daft?
A when short hours o' day that's no' worthy the name
An' doon comes the night on y'r heid an' ye've got t' win hame.

Twelve hours' mirk an' nivver a light on the coast;
Jock wi' rheumattics an' me wi' a hell o' a hoast;
A' thing drippin' an' nivver a place for t' dry it . . .
Winter, said ye? Come out in the boatie an' try it.

SMALL FARMER:

Skipper! Ye're richt, man;
A winter's nicht, man—
I'm sick o' the sicht, man.

Ma roads a' driftit,
Ma stacks a' shiftit,
Ma slates a' liftit.

Ilka roof leakin',
Ilka fire reekin',
Lost sheep for the seekin'.

Thawin' an' freezin'
An' blawin' an' bleezin'
Ayont a' reasin.

Mak a kirk or a mill o't,
A pint or a gill o't—
Ah've had ma fill o't.

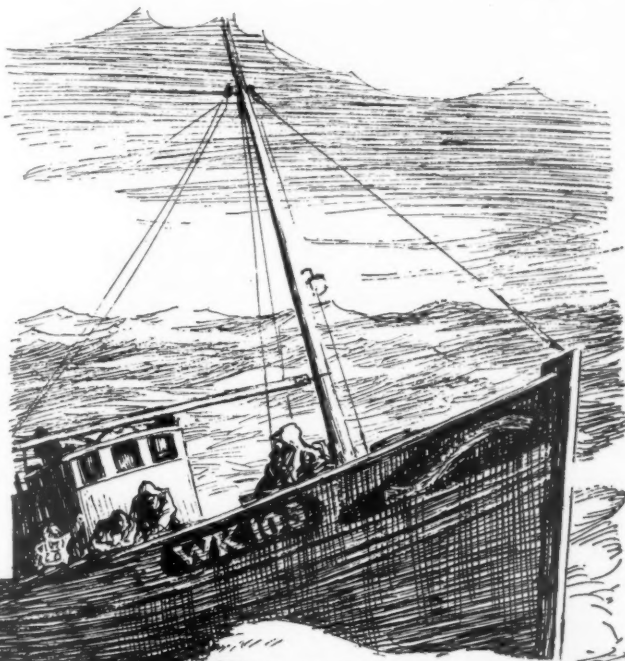
THE BARD:

Ahem! . . . Now mark how Winter's icy Sinews—

THE READER:

No, thanks; we've had it. The debate continues.

H. B.





BALLOON BADINAGE

"NOT only do I not know," said one member to another member, in tones a decibel or so louder than those the club is used to, "who destroyed the military power of Peter the Great of Russia—or when—or where—but I do not care."

The custom, dear to all the more intellectual newspapers, of publishing large-scale general-knowledge papers to keep their readers amused during the Christmas void met with little approval from him or his contemporaries, and the other member nodded sympathetically. "Lot of useless facts," he complained in the voice with which, from time to time, he condemned a lot of useless *Russians*, or useless *flying-machines*, or useless *rates and taxes*. "Don't give you a chance to use your brain. Kind of problem I like is one where you've got to use your judgement. You know. You're in a balloon with a successful actress and an escaped convict with a large family and an archbishop and an eighteen-stone lawyer who knows how to distil whisky from potatoes, and you have to make up your mind which one of 'em you're going to throw overboard as ballast."

Cartwright, who had retrieved the discarded paper and pencilled in three incorrect answers in as many minutes, looked over the top of it. "Funny you should say that," he observed. "I once found myself in exactly that predicament."

It was in the late autumn of 'eighty-seven, he began, when I met

Fifi Laforge. It was, I remember, at a week-end party at the Archbishop of Thurso's country palace. I was sitting in the north conservatory, admiring those magnificent calceolarias for which Thurso is justly famous, when I became aware of an intoxicating perfume. I looked up and saw Fifi Laforge, the reigning toast of six continents. Our eyes met.

"Have you seen any good football-matches lately?" she asked.

For a moment my iron self-control deserted me. "Miss Laforge," I cried, stumbling to my feet, "I love you! I think I must always have loved you. Tell me that you will be mine."

She put a finger to her lips. "Hush!" she whispered. "We may be overheard. Meet me in the balloon in half an hour."

I ought to have mentioned, Cartwright went on, that one of the Archbishop's guests had arrived by balloon, and that this now stood moored in the Italian garden. I need hardly tell you that those next thirty minutes dragged by for me on leaden feet; but at last the longed-for moment arrived. We had just finished a particularly exhausting set of Lancers, and the guests had retired for lemonade or champagne-cup or a cold shower, as their fancy took them. Seizing an opportunity when I knew I should be unobserved, I stole from the room and made my way cautiously towards the Italian garden.

As I passed by the door of the great south dining-room of the

palace I became aware of something amiss. It was in this room that the magnificent uranium-plate for which Thurso was famous was kept in a large glass-fronted display-cabinet; and as I went by on my errand of chivalry I perceived that there was someone inside hurriedly packing the plate into a large Gladstone bag.

You can well imagine in what a quandary I found myself. If I stopped to remonstrate with the stranger for what he was doing I should be guilty of an unpardonable breach of good manners in keeping Miss Laforge waiting for me. On the other hand, if I just passed on and pretended not to notice, there would be the possibility that the Archbishop, who after all was an old friend of mine, would suffer irreparable loss.

As I stood there in an agony of indecision the problem I found so hard to decide for myself was resolved for me; for the man suddenly became aware of my presence and, gripping his bag with both hands, dashed past me through the door. Quick as a flash I followed him, for he was making directly for the Italian garden. Streaking across the magnificent lawns for which Thurso is famous, he ran straight to the balloon, where he vaulted into the car and began frantically to untie the mooring-rope. Fortunately, it had got into rather a tangle, and while the rascal was fully occupied in loosening it I took the opportunity to send a passing footman for the Archbishop, who, you may be sure, wasted no time in hastening to the scene.

Together we climbed into the car of the balloon, and while the Archbishop assured himself that none of the priceless plate was missing, I took the scoundrelly thief by the scruff of the neck and shook him from side to side as a terrier is reputed to shake a rat, before throwing him, with a final spasm of rage, into a corner of the basket. Not until then did I turn to meet the lady on whose account I had embarked on this perilous adventure.

You can well imagine my surprise and consternation, said Cartwright, when I discovered her deep in conversation with a total stranger,

an enormous fellow who must have weighed every ounce of eighteen stone.

"What are you doing here?" I asked him indignantly. "Perhaps you are unaware that you are in a private balloon?"

"I am indeed aware," he answered coolly, "and what is more, the balloon belongs to me. What is even more, I have just witnessed a criminal assault by you on the person of this unfortunate man, who is an old and valued client of mine; for I should have mentioned that I am a lawyer. For that assault, as for the trespass on my balloon, I intend to exact the fullest satisfaction."

"Rubbish!" I cried. "See here, my man, if you are not out of this balloon in ten seconds, I shall make it my business to throw you out."

"There," the man replied, "you would be guilty of a serious error of judgement; for you would add to your crime of aggravated assault the more serious crime of murder"; and he pointed over the wicker side-wall of the car.

Picture my horror when I realized that the balloon had slipped its moorings and was now a thousand feet above the Minch and making rapidly for the Outer Hebrides. And as if that were not enough, we appeared to be losing height rapidly.

It was imperative that someone should take command without delay. "Quick!" I called. "There is not a moment to lose. One of us must be sacrificed so that the balloon may gain enough height to reach land. Which is it to be?"

My suggestion that the worthless thief should redeem himself by becoming the means of our salvation was, to my surprise, coldly received. It seemed the wretch had a wife and family whose sole support he was. Nor did my proposal that the lawyer, the loss of whose eighteen stone would afford us the greatest hope of safety, should be chosen fare any better. Alone among us, the Archbishop pointed out, he knew the formula for distilling whisky from potatoes, and if we were to be marooned on some lonely Hebride, where it appeared potatoes abounded, such knowledge would be essential to our well-being.

With tears scalding my eyes I turned to Fifi Laforge. "I had hoped," I told her, "that for many years yet you would have been spared to delight lovers of beauty the world over; and yet perhaps—" Luckily I did not have to complete this somewhat tricky speech, for both the Archbishop and the lawyer intervened to say that in no case would they consent to Miss Laforge's going over the side. "Then, my lord," I said quietly, turning to the Archbishop, "there is only one thing left."

"Exactly," said the Archbishop; and in less time than it takes to tell I was overpowered by the four of them and dropped over the side on to the magnificent rocks for which the Outer Hebrides are famous.

There was a long silence, until one of the members began tentatively, "What I don't see—"

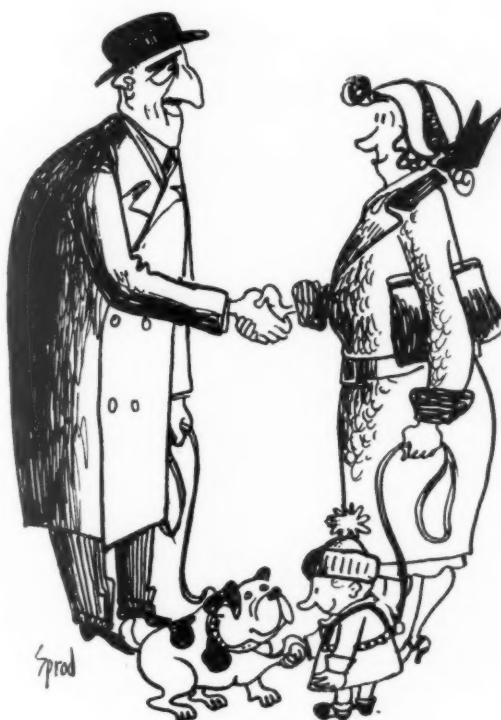
"It was very sad," Cartwright said, picking up the paper again and looking at the financial page with a far-away expression. "You see, the moment when I was thrown out was also the exact moment when the balloon came down to ground level, and I merely fell a few feet on to a gannet colony. Relieved of my weight, however, the balloon immediately soared into the air again and drifted out across the Atlantic; where to the best of my knowledge it was never heard of again."

"It just shows you," said the member who had spoken first, shaking his head.

B. A. YOUNG

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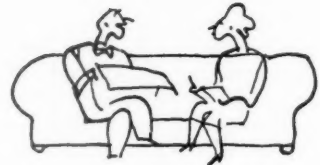
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. . . and only just inexorables like the people who regularly always send to us . . .



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. . . in other words, only just everyone as usual."



"That's rather too much. Have you got the runner-up?"



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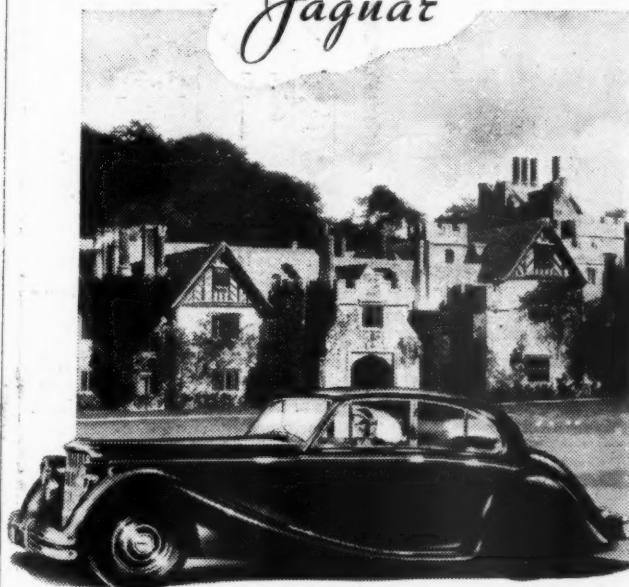
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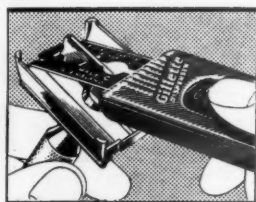
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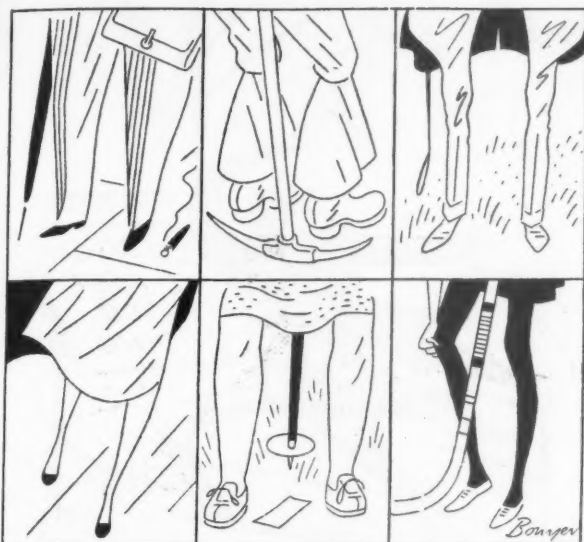
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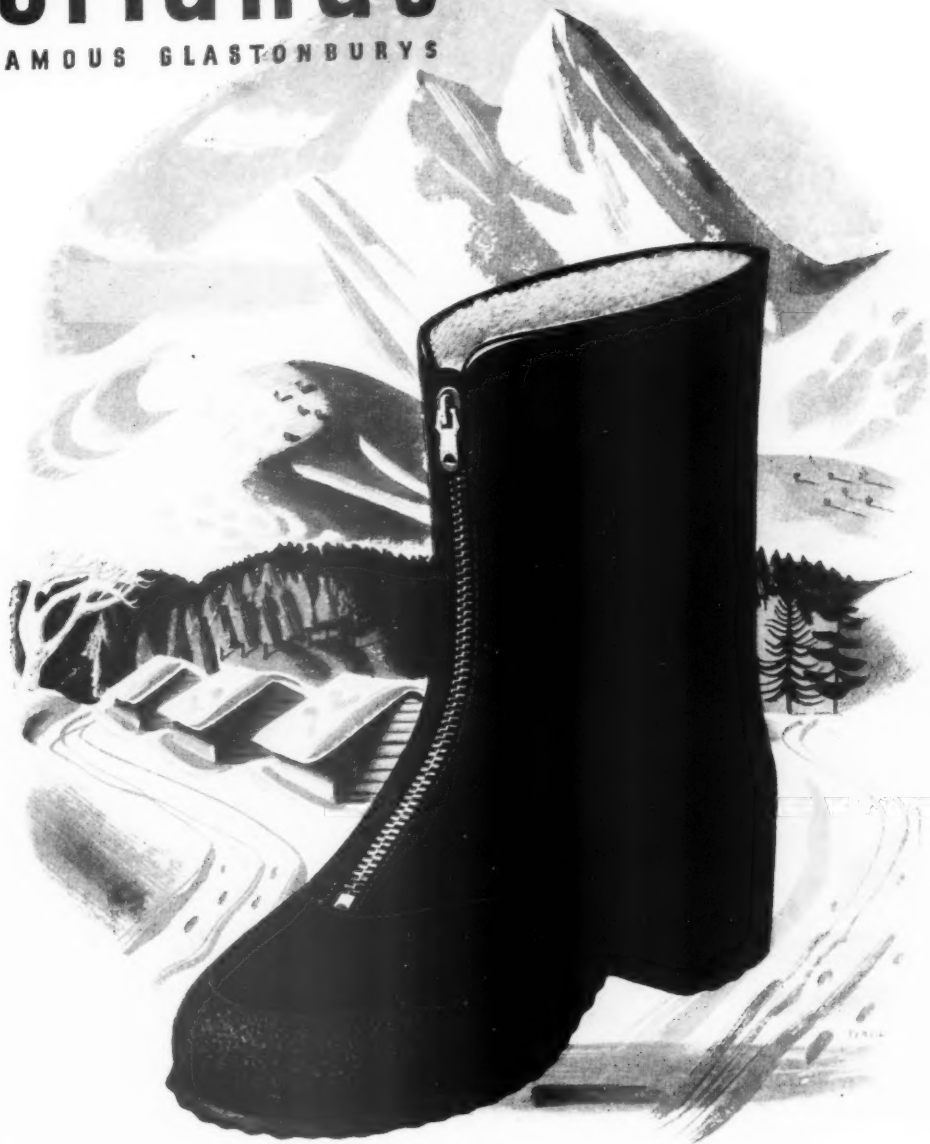
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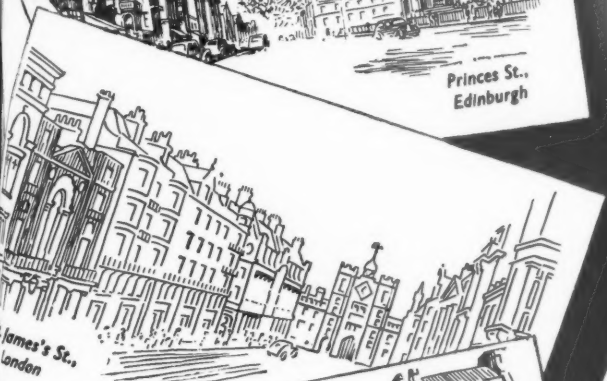
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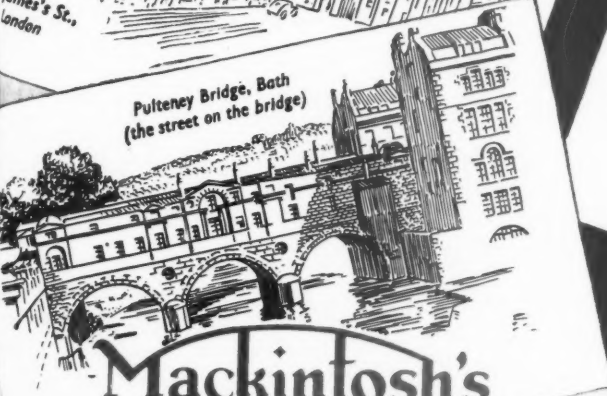
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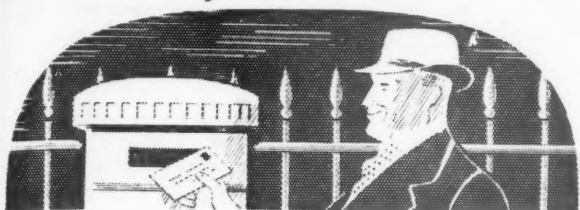
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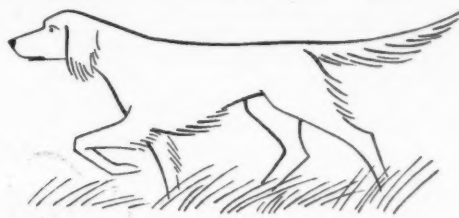


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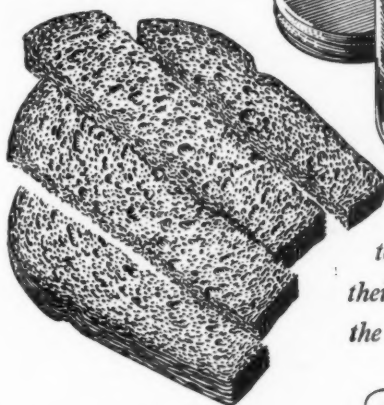
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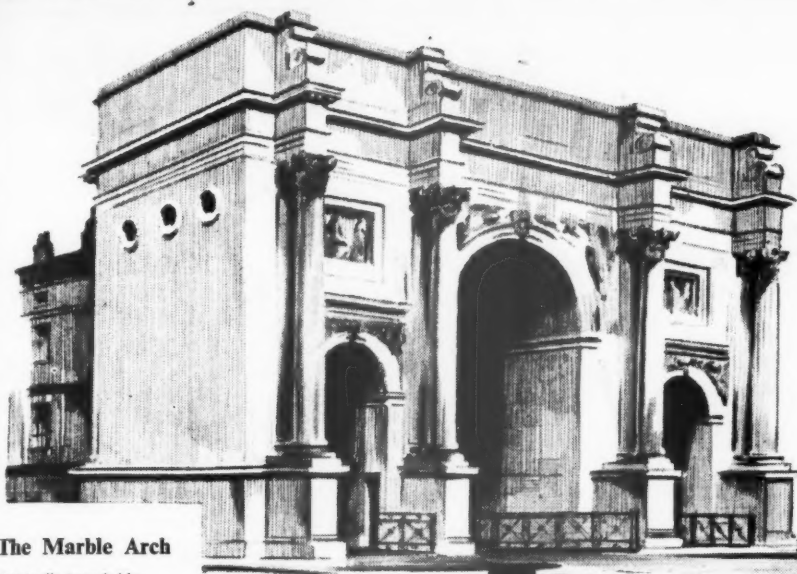


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The Marble Arch

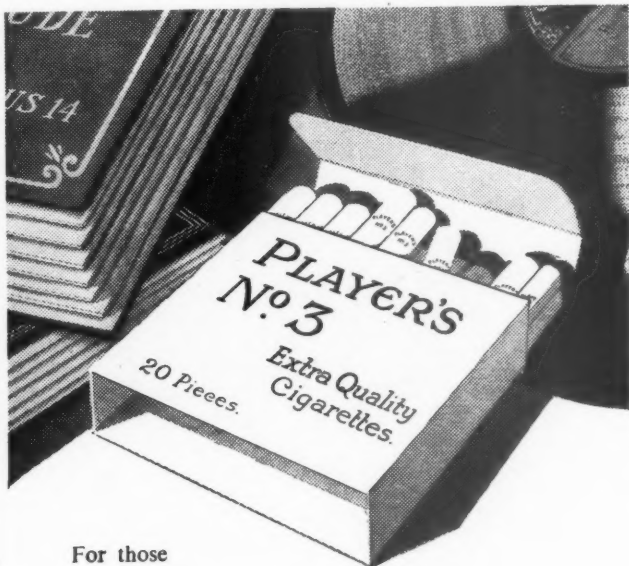
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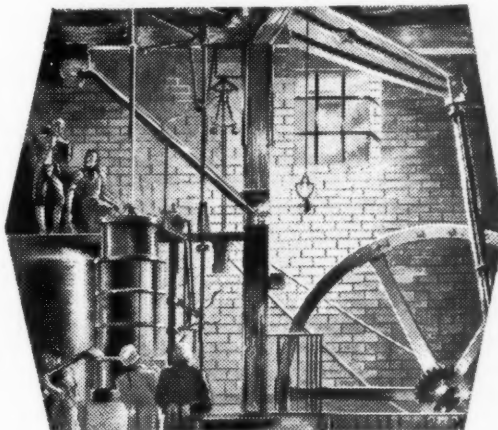
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[3P05]

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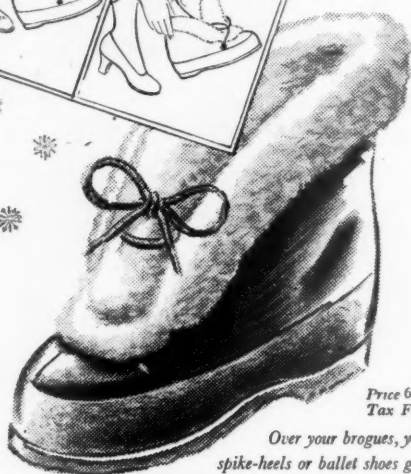


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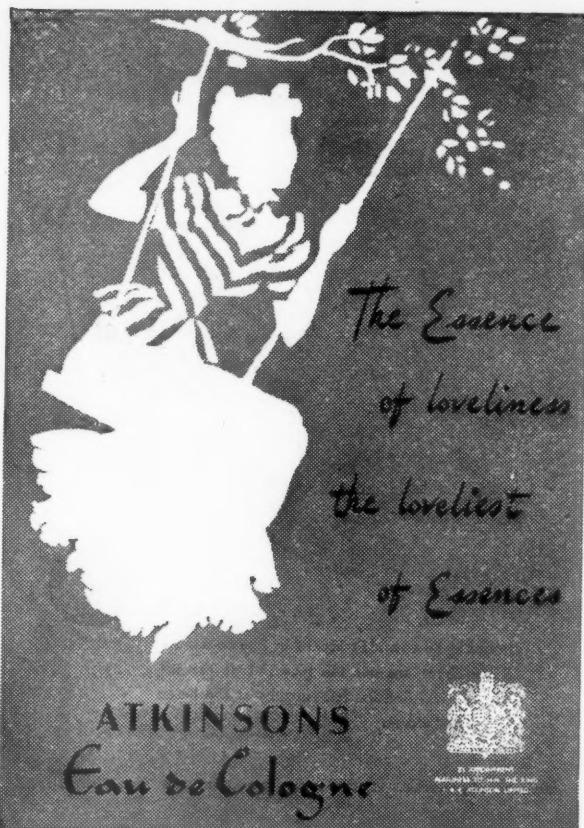
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